

PREMIERE ISSUE!

JUST LIVING ATLANTA - CELEBRATING LIFE!

JL KING

**A CANDID CONVERSATION
WITH AUTHOR, PUBLISHER
& BUSINESSMAN**

BET's MELYSSA FORD
GETS DOWN
TO BUSINESS

SEX IN THE
CITY
**CAN LOVE BE FOUND
ON THE INTERNET?**

LIFE AFTER 30
**A WOMAN OF FAITH
SHARES HER STORY**

INSIDE THE
GEORGIA
AQUARIUM

THE BLACK
GAY DOLLAR

CASH IN
ON YOUR
PASSION
**HOW HIP-HOP ARTIST
BOW WOW'S MOM
CREATES HER OWN
SUCCESS**

VOLUME 1 ISSUE 1 \$4.95 SPRING 2006



0-9740891-3-3

JUSTLIVINGTHEMAGAZINE.COM

WHEN YOU'RE
TALKING ABOUT
FINANCIAL SERVICES,
THE MOST IMPORTANT
THING IS LISTENING.

WE LIVE WHERE YOU LIVE.™



Planning your financial future is more comfortable with someone you know, someone who understands your needs. For information on banking, investing and insurance, call me today.

Quentin Franklin
Registered Representative
404-575-4147

LIKE A GOOD NEIGHBOR



STATE FARM IS THERE.™

Providing Insurance and Financial Services

State Farm Bank, Member FDIC, Equal Housing Lender. Securities offered through prospectus by registered representatives of State Farm VP Management Corp., 1-800-447-4930. Both are State Farm companies - One State Farm Plaza, Bloomington, IL 61710. Consult your tax or legal advisor for specific advice. **Insurance and securities products are not FDIC insured, are not guaranteed by State Farm Bank, and are subject to investment risk, including possible loss of principal.**

P03681 03/03

EXECUTIVE  CLOTHIERS

Miguel Gladiolo Wilson



Our mission is to make you, your best suit.

2846 Piedmont Rd. NE Atl, Ga 30305

404.816.8361

www.executiveclothiers.com



SPRING 06

Just Start:

ARTS, ENTERTAINMENT, FOOD, TRAVEL, NEWS, TRENDS

- 14 JL RISING STAR
- 16 GROOVE TO THIS: MUSIC REVIEW
- 17 WELL READ: BOOK REVIEW
- 19 WELCOME TO ATLANTA: INSIDE THE GEORGIA AQUARIUM
- 22 CALENDAR: THE COLOR PURPLE AND MORE
- 24 TASTE: WORLD OF SUMPTUOUS DELIGHTS AWAIT IN MIDTOWN

Aspire:

FEATURES, COVER STORIES AND SPECIAL REPORTS

- 32 BLACK GAY DOLLAR SERIES
- 36 MELYSSA FORD GETS DOWN TO BUSINESS
- 44 FASHION FORWARD
- 48 TURN PASSION TO PROFIT
- 56 SEX IN THE CITY: CAN LOVE BE FOUND ON THE INTERNET?
- 60 LIFE AFTER 30

In every issue:

- 09 PUBLISHER'S PAGE
- 10 STAYING POWER
- 30 YOUNG, GIFTED, GAY

CONTRIBUTORS



CRAIG STEWART, founder of Say It In A Card greeting cards, navigates online dating in the cover story —“Sex in the City: Can Love Be Found On the Internet?” From songwriting to the stage, the 29-year-old writer has worked with R&B vocalists Brandy, Tamya Gray and Tweet. His play, “A Day in the Life” won rave reviews after its 2002 debut.



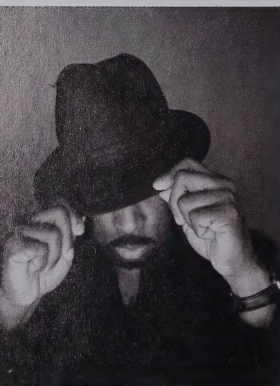
After studying post-apartheid politics at the University of Natal in South Africa, working with BET to raise HIV awareness, and traveling Europe and the Middle East, **KHALID KAMAU** returns to his hometown to write the dining column Taste, and the website: khalidkamau.com.



Former TV news anchor **CHANDRA BROOKS** shares her love of writing with readers in the feature “Turn Passion to Profit.” While she loves writing and cooking, her husband and new son are her true passions.



RODERICK TATE, founder of the book club BrothasWellRead.com, compiles a list of must-reads for Just Living's Book Review page. Tate is currently working on a collection of short stories, “This Is No Ordinary Love.” In his spare time, he serves as a volunteer for a community literacy program and enjoys traveling.





SIGNATURE 4 MEN CLOTHING

The exclusive men's apparel, shoes, and accessories boutique. We carry designer lines such as: Ryan Kenny, Beau Gosse, Cavi Designs, BB London, Just Cavalli, Custo, Red Monkey Company, Monarchy,

Ed Hady, and 575. Visit us today!

2770 Lenox Road, Atlanta, GA 30324

(404) 869-9933



JUST LIVING ATLANTA

Publisher, CEO & Founder
James L. King

Chief Operating Officer
C. Allen Alken

Editor-In-Chief
Anaré V. Holmes

Design Director
Brandon King

Designers
Marion Designs, Aaron Blazey

Contributing Writers
Roderick Tate, Khalid Kamau, Chandra Brooks, Corey Punzi, Eric Lawson, Dr. Gary James, the Rev. Dr. Kathi Martin, John A. Allen, Craig Stewart, Brandon Richardson, Darío Carlos Morales, Ravon Keith, Sean Anderson, Milko Evans, L.L. Wilson, Lawrence Footman

Contributing Photographers
T. Moore, Jerry Boles, Thierry Jones, Mary Beth Blanding

Advertising Sales
McKnight & Associates Consulting

Promotions Consultant
Sean Anderson

Special Events Consultant
M-Squared Public Relations

Editing/Research Consultant
Lamarevelous Editing and Publishing, Inc.

Just Living Atlanta
937 Monroe Dr. NE Suite 276
Atlanta, GA 30308

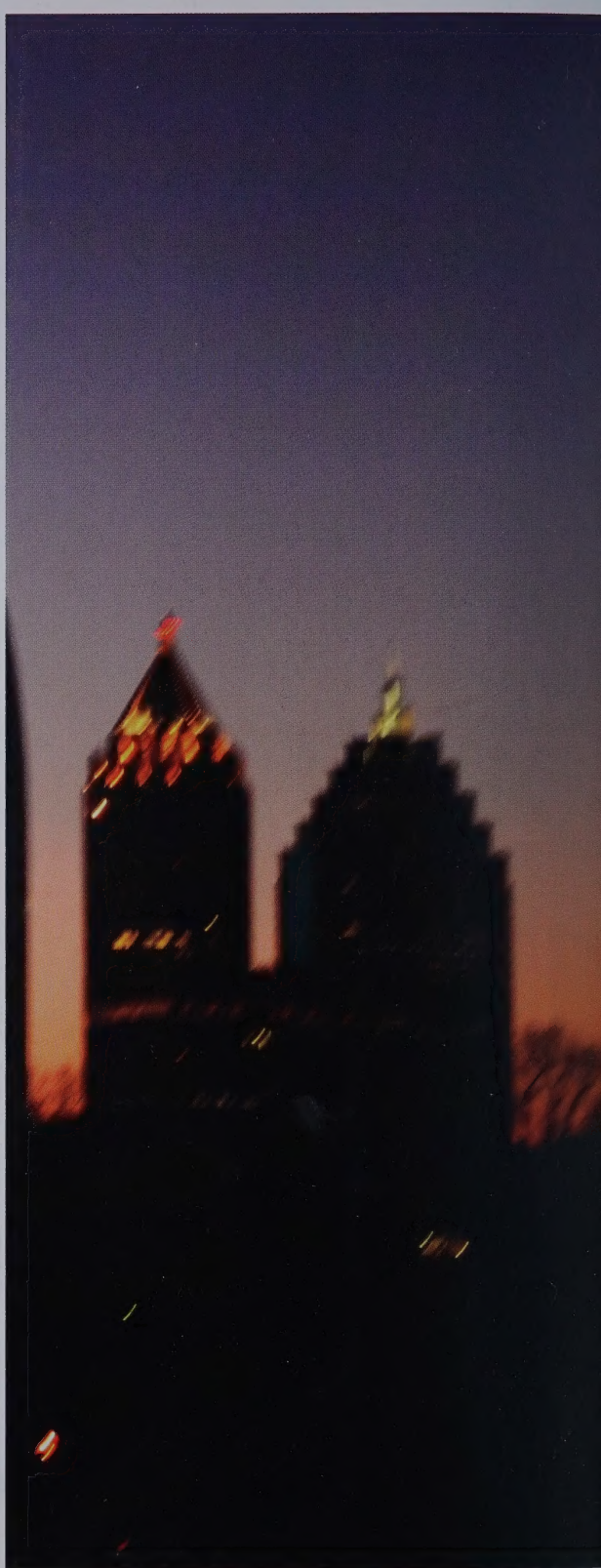
For general information and subscription services, call 866
205 9228. Check us out online at justlivingthemagazine.com.
For advertising information, call 866 205 9228, or email
advertising@justlivingthemagazine.com

Copyright © 2006 by Urban Moon Publishing, Inc. (ISSN-1559-3762) All Rights reserved. Unsolicited submissions become the sole property of Urban Moon Publishing and shall not be returned.

Just Living Atlanta does not endorse or recommend any commercial products, processes or services.

The views and opinions of author and advertisers expressed within Just Living Atlanta do not necessarily state or reflect those of Just Living Atlanta or its staff, and they may not be used for advertising or product endorsement purposes.

While striving to present true and correct facts, Just Living Atlanta makes no guarantees about the accuracy of the information, data, advertisements, graphics or other content contained in the publication. Publication of the name or photograph of any person or organization should not be construed as any indication of the sexual orientation of that person or organization. Reproduction of Just Living Atlanta, in whole or in part, is strictly prohibited without the express written consent of Just Living Atlanta. Just Living Atlanta is a registered trademark of Urban Moon Publishing, Inc.



PUBLISHER'S PAGE: I LOVE ATLANTA

It is with great pride that I introduce you to Just Living Atlanta, where we strive to celebrate the lives of the city's urban LGBT community. This publication provides Atlanta's rapidly growing same-gender-loving (SGL) community and those who support it a guide to explore the city from our perspective. With content that is sure to inspire and empower our readers, JL will include a variety of hard-hitting topics ranging from politics and health to spirituality, food, fashion and entertainment.

There is a new cultural renaissance happening within the community, and JL is part of it. Our publication is about living and experiencing gay Atlanta, not only from a social and professional perspective but also through a philanthropic, community-focused approach. Our content embodies these ideals for you to take full advantage of all Atlanta has to offer.

We live in a place where opportunity is abundant, which is why I love living here. From the bustling business community that exists to eclectic entertainment options, every day truly is an opening day in our progressive city. Many of you may not know this, but my mother, Lillie Mae King, was born and raised in Cartersville, Ga about 30 minutes north of the city. My affinity for Atlanta began after hearing the stories my mother would tell about the frequent trips she made to the area as a little girl. She raved about the good food and was impressed by the way the people looked out for one another, qualities that to this day make it one of the country's best places to live.

Our desire is to make Just Living magazine one of the best publications in the nation. We want it to be something that makes you proud. Subscribe and visit our Web site at justlivingthemagazine.com. Help us get this publication in the hands of your friends, relatives, co-workers and associates.

Let me leave you with this. Life is too short to let the past hold you back and steal your present joy. Let go and let God. I am just living, celebrating every day I wake, thankful that God gave me another chance to make a difference in the world. I hope to do just that with JL magazine — Atlanta's next big thing!

From my heart to theirs, a special thank you to all the investors who believed in this project and put their money where their mouth is.

James L. King

Publisher, Founder, CEO and President
URBAN MOON PUBLISHING



STAYING POWER

0.10 "I have work to do."

"I have work to do."

"I HAVE WORK TO DO," echoed the voices from my television while I prepared to pay respect to a woman whose life created the endless possibilities before me today.

The voices were the sounds of a trio of singers comforting grief, celebrating sacrifice and carrying the song of Coretta Scott King — the civil right's movements revered soprano — during a musical tribute held in her honor. I was en route to join the line of hundreds of others wanting to salute greatness and view her body. The chance to say, "Thank you. I am a child of the dream your husband, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., spoke about on that historic day in Washington."

It seemed the least I could do, but the baritone, tenor and soprano sounds stopped me all at once. I submitted to hear the vocalists and orators lift up her name in high praise and admiration.

Reflecting on the life and times of first lady Coretta, I was reminded how ordinary people — committed to their calling — do extraordinary things because decisions are made, actions are followed through and no matter how tough the journey is at times consistency trumps complacency.

Thank God for the Kings and all other known and unknown barrier-breakers. Their prayers and vigilance ripened the fruit of opportunity I eat from today. They walked through the finish line so that I may start a new race.

The torch is now in my hands.
I'm learning the importance of what it means

to stay in my lane. It's good to know that when the fog of unworthiness clouds my vision, the legacy of King and other heroes and heroines are with me in the form of the printed word. In low moments, I reach out for their stories in search of how they got over life's hurdles.

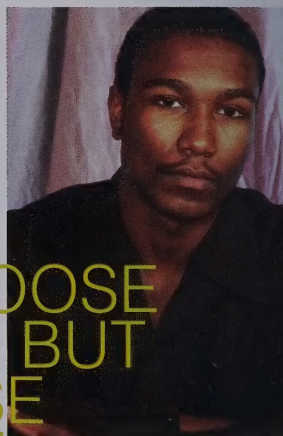
In various anecdotes, the answer always comes down to this: challenges and obstacles can only be faced head-on. You either find a way or make a way to get over. To do that requires work.

"WE DON'T CHOOSE
HOW WE FEEL, BUT
WE DO CHOOSE
HOW WE LIVE."

My best friend once said to me, "We don't choose how we feel, but we do choose how we live," and I'm grateful Mrs. King chose to live on the battlefield, fighting to eradicate injustice suffered by those marginalized by oppression and discrimination.

I've already been bought and paid for through work she and others had to do.

Anaré V. Holmes
Editor-In-Chief
editorial@justlivingthemagazine.com





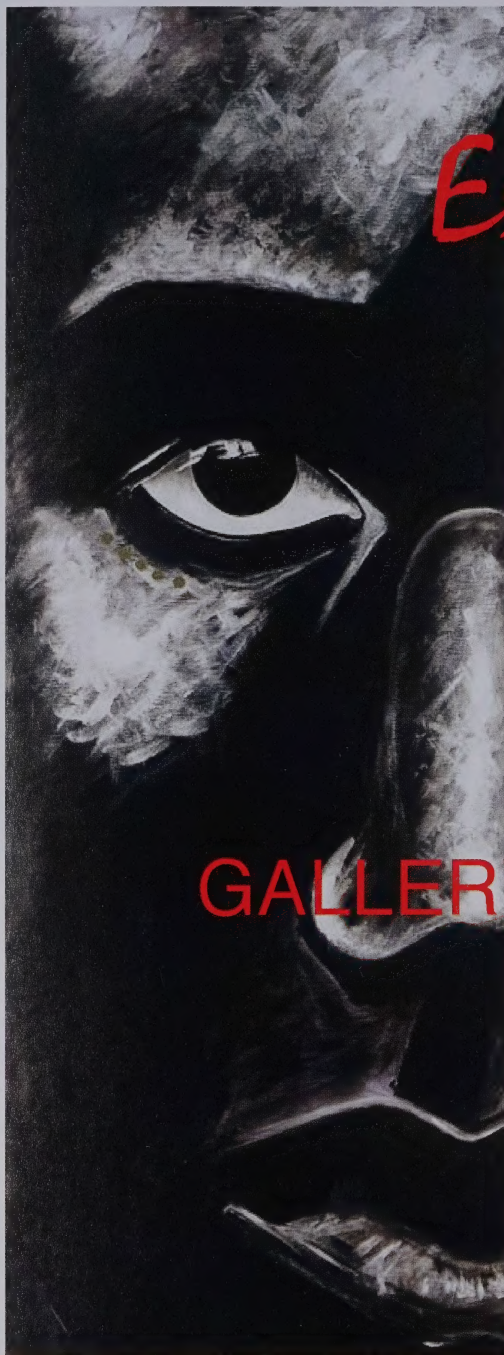
CAUGHT *In The* CLOSET

HIGH END FASHION, SHOES AND ACCESSORIES FOR MEN AND WOMEN

AT FRENCHKISS ATLANTA AND SHOE BAR

ShoeBAR • Suite 100A
404-815-8722

FrenchKISS Atlanta • Suite 100B
404-815-8727



Expression

- . 3000 Square feet of innovative, Original Art
- . Available for Private Rentals
- . Third Thursday's Art & Jazz After Dark
- . Open by Appointment Only
- . "Private Collector" Memberships
- . Monthly Wine Tastings

GALLERY253 gallery . studio . space

253 Trinity Avenue
(Historic Castleberry Hill Arts District)
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

Phone: 404.521.0813
Fax: 404-522.5538
www.gallery253.com

CELEBRATE LIFE //

Welcome to our debut issue of **JUST LIVING ATLANTA**, your latest guide to food, fashion and fun.

In our premiere issue, we talk to sultry model and BET host Mylissa Ford about why she respects the LGTB community. We navigate the world of online dating with "Sex In the City." Our publisher JL King talks about coming up from the down low, while we show the reasons Leon Parham is "Fashion Forward."

Our Black Gay Dollar series reveals local businesses you can support and how you can maximize your economic influence. After you take care of business, read further to find our home to creative writers, poets and visual artists, Live To Tell as writer Craig Stewart looks into the nuances of "Life & Love."

Make the most of your days, do not take for granted those you care for, and stay positive.

Pick up our next issue:

Power: Who Has It and Who's Trying to Get It!

FEATURING:

Atlanta's Most Influential Gays and Lesbians of color

Living Large: Inside celebrity homes

The State of Our Union: pride and politics

We encourage you to submit your story ideas to Anare V. Holmes, our Editor-In-Chief at: editorial@justlivingthemagazine.com. If you are interested in being a contributing photographer, contact Brandon King at: bk@justlivingthemagazine.com. To subscribe and advertise call: 866.205.9228.

Celebrate life,
JL Editors

The Best Is Yet To Come! // Written By Miko Evans

*When I wake up and see myself
In the mirror at Dawn,
I look into my eyes and say,
The best is yet to come.*

*When I look outside to gaze
To see the break of dawn,
I smile to give thanks to the Universe as I hear it say,
The best is yet to come.*

*I dress myself for the day's task,
Uncertain of the dangers ahead and some.
I cannot let this stop me,
For The best is yet to come.*

*Situations are sometimes weary,
Challenges may be tough.
But the best is soon to come
I will miss the Best, if I Quit and Give Up!*

*There have been times I wanted to quit,
But look where I've come from.*

*I have so much to be grateful for,
And there is more still to come
There were days when I was lonely,
I didn't know if I would have food, or just a bread crumb.
It's amazing, in the midst of it all, how I could still say
The best is yet to come.*

*Even as a child, I didn't always get
everything I wanted,
but I knew that there was more in store,
the best was soon to come.*

*After 10 years, and looking over all things,
I can evaluate from then to here.
Yes, the best is yet to come, but guess what?
The best is already here!*

*Look at me! I'm alive and well.
I have hands, feet, and eyes to see.
Emotions, abilities, I have my own mind,
And a spirit that is truly set free.*

*No longer am I bound
By what people think, do, or say.
The I AM spirit is within me
The best is here, right now, to stay.
I have all that I need inside of me.
I never have to worry, nor fear;
The True I AM in me knows all things,
Yes! the best is already here!*

*People may call me crazy,
So-called friends may think I'm dumb,
But eyes haven't seen, nor have ears heard,
until Truth is revealed and the best has come.*

*So in closing I say to you for 2006, Don't Give Up!
There's more success and abundance in life.
Yes, the Best is Already here,
but, Our Journey is not over,
For the Best Is Yet To Come.*



JL RISING STAR: YEWANDE

★

IN JUST OVER ONE YEAR SINCE FOUNDING LOTUS RECORDS, Yewande has survived underground obscurity to become one of the most sought after independent artists in the world. Her very own brand of urban rock music has captivated audiences from BET's 106 & Park to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and taken center stage with the likes of the Black Eyed Peas, Enrique Iglesias, Michelle Branch, India.Arie, Sean Paul and Maroon 5. As one of the most popular artists in the elusive college market, Mountain Dew and AMP Energy Drink recently crowned Yewande one the "Top 12 College Artists" in the nation with a nomination to appear on MTV soon. And with unanimous critical praise of her self-written/produced debut EP "Evolution" (funded in part by shoe conglomerate Steve Madden), it would seem that Yewande is destined to change how we look at life and listen to music. But who is Yewande, and what is urban rock? What's her story and where did her evolution begin?

From her earliest teachings in classical voice and piano, seven year-old Yewande was mesmerized by music's undeniable power. With the pounding of a keyboard, she reveled in applause; with the rhyming of song, people cried when they heard her sing. And as the artist grew older, she accepted that the gift she possessed was not hers, but something bigger. The industry pressured her to conform, while listeners around the world demanded more of her soul-stirring sound and Yewande just wanted to change the world.

Her Louisiana roots tell blues-tinged stories with the angst of rock and the power of soul. Much like her progressive contemporaries – Outkast, Lenny Kravitz, Meshell N'degeocello, Kina and Black Eyed Peas – her groundbreaking music dares to be bound by genre. But because her unique sound never "fit" mainstream airwaves, Yewande

often struggled to find a place for her music. Like a clear reflection of her childhood, the creation of "alternative soul" was not only new almost 5 years ago...it was necessary. "I was always different. [As a teenager] I had bad hair, bad makeup and was more fascinated with music, history and social issues than who was doing what to who," she said. Stories of her African and American-Indian ancestors had always been particularly special to young Yewande. Knowing that music was central to their freedom inspired her to bridge the gap between music, race and culture with a universal message and sound.

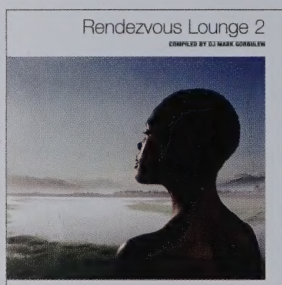
"Evolution" celebrates that enduring human spirit, fear, struggle, joy, love, freedom and desire. Injected with a fusion of live band, international flavor and pop sensibilities, the answer is abundantly clear. Are you ready to elevate your soul? The journey begins with "Evolution."

COURTESY OF LOTUS RECORDS

...I had bad hair, bad makeup and was more fascinated with music, history and social issues than who was doing what to who.

0.15

GROOVE TO THIS: MUSIC REVIEWS



VARIOUS ARTISTS

Rendezvous Lounge 2 (Rendezvous music)

This sequel to the critically acclaimed, underground hit **RENDEZVOUS LOUNGE** is a dynamic compilation of down-tempo electronica, also known as chill. In the tradition of Buddha Bar, Café Del Mar and Hotel Costes, this album lends atmosphere to any occasion, creating an undeniable mood that can exist as both the focal point of and an accompaniment to the listener's lifestyle. Music compiled by DJ Mark Gorbulew, who carefully selected from leading international chill musicians representing France, Holland, Italy, Spain, Britain and the United States. This record provides a multifaceted listening experience, subtly guiding the listener on a voyage through the world of down-tempo chill.



VARIOUS ARTIST

Smooth Jazz Collection Vol. 4 CD

This project opens up with Wayman Tisdale and his energizing rendition of "Aint No Stoppin Us Now," and continues with the best names in smooth jazz, with Kenny G., Sade, Grover Washington Jr., Anita Baker and Boney James to name a few. This latest compilation from Atlanta's smooth jazz leaders provides an exhilarating listening experience from "Summertime" (Kenny G featuring George Benson) to "Back into my Heart" (Chris Botti). Once you listen you are reminded that Smooth Jazz 107.5 WJZZ is the smoothest place on your radio.

In addition to smooth music for your ears, program director Dave Koz has informed Just Living magazine that a portion of the proceeds from the CD sales go to Children's Healthcare of Atlanta. So, not only will you get an array of great smooth jazz to add to your personal collection, you also will be helping out a good cause at the same time.

CORY PUNZI



Hotel Indigo™ invites you to experience a refreshing lodging alternative where you will enjoy the benefit of high peace to offset the high pace of travel.

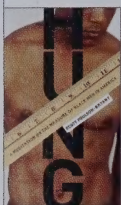
Step inside...and sense the difference. The colors calm, the imagery excites, and the architecture delights. Each guestroom offers a refreshing experience with **plush bedding, hardwood flooring, a spa-inspired shower, plus the other services and amenities** you've come to expect...all pleasingly presented in a very unexpected way.

You are relaxed, refreshed, renewed. You are inspired. Hotel Indigo™. More than a room...an inspiration.

hotelindigo.com
866-2-INDIGO



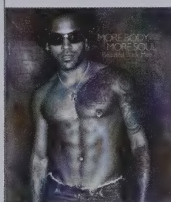
WELL READ: BOOKS



HUNG

Scott Poulson-Bryant

"For a lot of men, how you hang has a lot to do with who you hang with, where you hang, and sometimes, how long you hang once you get there," writes Scott Poulson-Bryant, founding editor of *Vibe* and co-author of *What's your Hi-Fi IQ?*, in his new book, a libidinous hybrid of cultural commentary and personal anecdotes. The pervasive belief that African-American men are prodigiously endowed presents a conundrum for the contemporary black male, who is simultaneously drawn to and repelled by this notion. In the book's opening pages, Poulson-Bryant admits that, as an African-American man, he should be "hung like a horse," but he's not, nor does he want to be. "I think of black-man dick and I think that once upon a time we were hung from trees for being, well, hung." Today, Poulson-Bryant says, black men risk being viewed as little more than an engorged sex organ. Take "Simon," for example, a successful athlete who refuses to take showers at the gym and changes clothes with a towel wrapped around him, because he would rather be a star on the basketball court than in the locker room. For those seeking an academic approach, Poulson-Bryant's "meditation" on the "measure of black men in America" may not measure-up, as much of the research is Internet-based or culled from anecdotal narratives provided by largely unnamed acquaintances. Still, Poulson-Bryant's assertion that black men "need to start thinking like the Big Swinging Dicks on Wall Street instead of acting like the Big Swinging Dicks of the public's fascination" has the kind of thrust and vigor necessarily to stimulate dialogue on this topic.



MORE BODY, MORE SOUL

Duane Thomas

As hip-hop conquers the world and black actors sweep up awards, a new group of black men has risen to the forefront of popular culture. These are men who are not afraid to express themselves and who possess a unique sense of freedom when it comes to style and image. They are all here in this stunning visual tribute to black male beauty. From film and television, you'll find photographs that reveal the suave Jamie Foxx, the sleek Mekhi Phifer, the lovable Will Smith and the edgy Vin Diesel. From the world of music, images convey the raw muscular power of such performers as 50 Cent, Ja Rule and Usher. And sports figures like Lebron James, Allen Iverson, and Stephon Marbury display a comfortable elegance with their athletic prowess in awe-inspiring photographs.

Whatever their mission, each of these men has made his own way in the world, forging his iconic status out of his individual personality and attitude. For black men, style is not just a matter of how they wear – or don't wear – clothes. It's an opportunity to create an image, to change people's minds, or to seduce. African-American men possess a fashion vocabulary all their own. From jazz zoot suits and African hairstyles to hip-hop furs and gangsta rap gold chains, black men often pioneer trends that later become part of the mainstream. Featuring work by top photographers including Barron Claiborne, David LaChapelle, Roger Erickson, Guzman and Dah Len, *More Body, More Soul* by Duane Thomas – who has worked for *Vogue*, *Elle*, *Essence*, *InStyle*, *Details* and *Esquire* – gives us a candid and provocative look at the sensuality and vitality of today's most talked-about black male stars.



A DEEPER BLUE: PASSION MARKS II

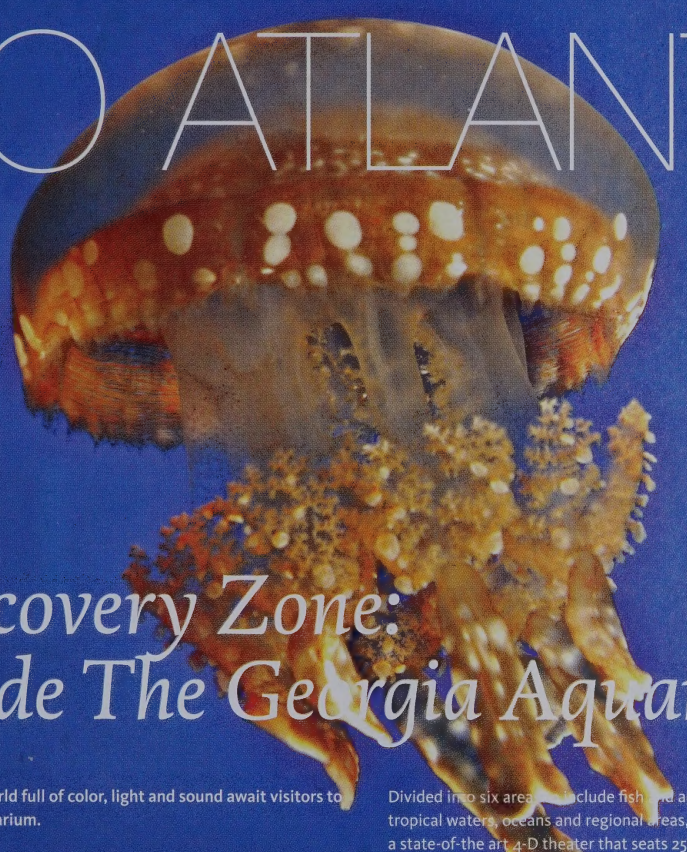
Lee A. Hayes

With gripping detail, "A Deeper Blue" intertwines love, hate, jealousy, infidelity, revenge, and ultimately, murder. Author Lee Hayes shows that the line between love and hate is a thin one -- and that sins from the past can evolve into nightmares of the present.

Intense from beginning, "A Deeper Blue" hypnotizes readers into a story of lust and love. Kevin Davis finds his tumultuous relationship with his lover Daryl Harris in serious jeopardy. Pulled in different directions, Daryl must choose between the lover he's dreamed about and a new temptation; both of whom have female lovers -- past and present -- who are angry about being betrayed.

COMPILED BY RODERICK TATE

WELCOME TO ATLANTA



Discovery Zone: Inside The Georgia Aquarium

A remarkable world full of color, light and sound await visitors to the Georgia Aquarium.

Atlanta's latest attraction is in such high demand, in some cases, reservations to walk through the 500,000 square-foot work of art must be made a week in advance.

A special gift of \$200 million from Home Depot co-founder Bernie Marcus helped the world's largest aquarium open debt free—a whole new meaning to charitable giving.

Divided into six areas that include fish and animals found in rivers, tropical waters, oceans and regional areas, the complex also houses a state-of-the-art 4-D theater that seats 250.

Here is a sample of the more than 100,000 fish and animals on display inside and which part of the facility you can find them housed.

All photos courtesy of the Georgia Aquarium unless otherwise noted.

Lagoon Jelly / Tropical Diver



Photo Courtesy of New York Aquarium





0.21



Georgia Aquarium
Admission \$19.50-\$22.75
georgiaaquarium.com
404-581-4000

Clockwise from L to R: Leafy Sea Dragon, Beluga Whale,
Clown Fish, Whale Shark

Photo Courtesy of Marj Awai

CALENDAR: MARCH // APRIL

'THE COLOR PURPLE'

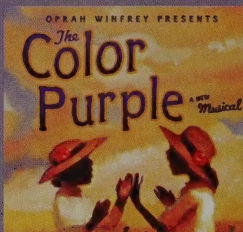
"The Color Purple, the Musical" on Broadway is a rapturous whirlwind of action. Playwright Marsha Norman ("Night, Mother") stays so slavishly true to Alice Walker's novel that at times transitions from dark and poignant to comic and ebullient are jarringly abrupt, especially early in the first act. Still, the lyrics crafted by Brenda Russell, Allee Willis and Stephen Bray are so infectious and the cast's work so strong that those familiar with the novel or its film incarnation can adapt. By Act 2, you are so entangled in this web of angst, despair, love and triumph that you are moved, inspired and, ultimately, changed in the same way you were when you read Walker's masterpiece or saw Steven Spielberg's powerful cinematic interpretation.

The simplistic yet breathtaking scenery and innovative storytelling achieved through the choreography of Donald Byrd shines in scenes in which Celie finds Nettie's long-lost letters and their lives reconnect – literally – onstage through African-inspired dance and chanting.

But music reigns supreme as the cast belts out blues-tinged originals like "Push the Button" and "Hell No!" and power ballads "I'm Here" and "What About Love?" – the latter due to be released as a single by Patti LaBelle and Jill Scott. The Angel Records CD is a must-have.

This musical is an obvious vehicle for the women's stories, and a gifted foursome (Virginia Ann Woodruff, Maia Nkenge Wilson, Kimberly Ann Harris and Anika Ellis) make an amazing modern-day Greek chorus of harmonizing small-town gossips. They not only help make sense of the blur that is several decades of events but also provide wry comic relief in the heaviest moments.

Tony Award nods are likely for Felicia P. Fields, who emerges as the best actress with her dead-on portrayal of iron-willed Sophia; Elizabeth Withers-Mendes, who brings the incomparable Shug Avery to life with pipes that show the veteran session vocalist is clearly the play's best singer; and Broadway veteran LaChanze ("Once on This Island"), whose



metamorphosis from timid teenage rape victim to confident, sexually liberated businesswoman gives the lead role of Celie her due grace and depth.

Unfortunately, the complex men in Walker's tale – Mister (Kingsley Legg), Harpo (Brandon Victor Dixon) and Old Mister (Lou Myers of "A Different World") – are relegated to archetypal roles, but Legg and Dixon milk their parts for all they can.

This highly anticipated stage adaptation is well worth the airfare to New York.

– L. L. Wilson

'EPIPHANY': GOSPEL, BALLET & JAZZ

The gospel according to Ballethnic Ballethnic Dance Company will present the world premiere of "Epiphany," March 16-19 at the Georgia Tech First Center for the Arts. "Epiphany" seamlessly blends the energy of jazz, the uplifting spirit of gospel with the atmospheric grace of dance.

With original choreography by Lucas, "Epiphany" will include live musical selections led by Ballethnic Musical Director L. Gerard Reid. This joyous celebration of dance and music will feature performances by vocalist Najuma in collaboration with Urban Griot, the Full Circle Jazz Band and Shaw Temple A.M.E. Mass Choir.



The Color Purple on Broadway

Broadway Theatre
New York City | Admission varies
Tickets on sale through Sept. 3, 2006
www.colorpurple.com or call
Telecharge at 212-239-6200

Fest Center for the Arts

Atlanta | \$22-\$52
Discount available to until
March 10 for J.L. Atlanta readers
by calling 770-319-6732
www.tickets.com or
call 404-894-9600

03/01

"Bluish"

An Atlanta love story by Janace Shaffer, Alliance (Hertz) Theatre. Through March 5. \$25. alliancetheatre.org

03/04

"The Stinky Cheese Man (and Other Fairly Stupid Tales)"

Afternoon shows only. Alliance (Hertz) Theatre. Through March 5. \$20 for adults. \$15 for children alliancetheatre.org

03/05

Kenn and Kindred.

7:30 p.m. \$35-\$55. Fox Theatre. www.ticketmaster.com

03/09

Book Discussion

"Spelman College and the Civil Rights Movement" by Spelman sociology professor Harry Lefever. 7:30 p.m. Charis Books & More, 1189 Euclid Ave. Free.

03/10

Mike Epps

8 p.m. \$39.75-\$47.75. Fox Theatre. www.ticketmaster.com.

03/12

Gilbert & Sullivan's

"The Mikado" Featuring Carl Rosa Opera Company. \$37.50-\$57.50. www.foxtheatre.org

03/15

Broadway Jr. on Tour

Follows the fictional Broadway Junior Theatre Club from Everytown Middle School deciding which show to produce. www.foxtheatre.org.

03/16

Book signing, "Baby Brother's Blues"

The latest tale of West End denizens by Pearl Cleage. 7:30 p.m. Charis Books & More, 1189 Euclid Ave. Free.

03/20

R. Kelly

8 p.m. \$55-\$80. Fox Theatre. www.foxtheatre.org

03/24

CeCe Peniston

11 p.m. \$20-\$25 Atlanta Live | 404-982-0989

04/03

"Wild Stars Seeking Midnight Sun" Book reading

A short story collection by J. California Cooper. 5:30 p.m. Shrine of the Black Madonna, 944 Ralph David Abernathy Blvd. SW. Free.

04/07

"... said Said."

Second Kendada Graduate Playwriting Competition winning play, by Kenneth Lin. Through April 30. \$30. www.alliancetheatre.org

04/08

"Like a Dog on Linoleum"

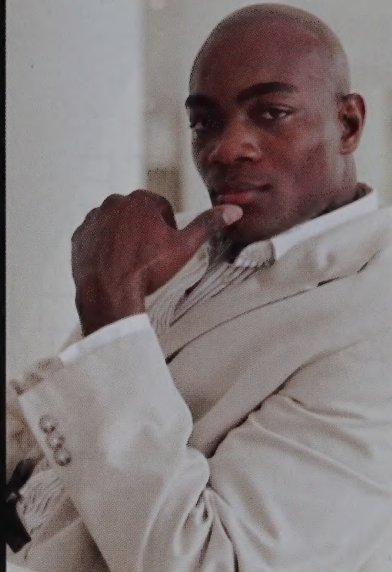
Leslie Jordan returns with his hilarious stand-up show, 14th Street Playhouse. \$41.67-\$50.93. www.woodruffcenter.org/14thstreetplayhouse



The 2006 Total Man and Total Woman Contest

Sponsored by

JUST LIVING MAGAZINE



We are searching for that special man and woman who are making a difference in the LGBT community. This contest is not about outward appearance, but those whose inner beauty shines through their dedication and commitment to the culture and diversity of Hotlanta. If this sounds like someone you know, do not hesitate to nominate them to be the Total Man and Total Woman for 2006.

Just Living Atlanta will select both a man and woman to be featured on the cover of this summer's sizzling issue. Their stories will also be told in feature articles in which they can share their life experiences.

We are looking for pillars of the LGBT community whose strong presence truly reflects Atlanta's distinctiveness. Remember, they will be representing you and your city.

This Is Not a Beauty Contest, but a **Quality** Contest! So if you know a Community Activist, Outreach Coordinator, Volunteer, or even your best friend nominate them and let us decide if they truly are representing Atlanta's prime LGBT Community.

Please include a one page letter stating why he or she should be selected, a Bio, and headshot along with your completed application.

The winners will also receive:

- 1. Two round trip airline tickets to New York City**
- 2. Tickets to a Broadway stage play**
- 3. Ground transportation**
- 4. Dinner for two**
- 5. Both winners will be Guests of Honor during an Exclusive V. I. P. reception hosted by Just Living Atlanta.**
- 6. A shopping spree at one of Atlanta's premiere boutiques.**
- 7. The winner(s) will be featured on the cover of Just Living magazine.**



To nominate someone you know, please visit:
www.justlivingthemagazine.com for details.

TASTE: WORLD OF SUMPTUOUS DELIGHTS AWAIT IN MIDTOWN

FIRST DATES ARE LIKE JOB INTERVIEWS. After weeks, or even months, of searching, or minding your own business, you finally find something that ignites your imagination. But now, to land the opportunity, you've got to temper all that emotion. You stand in front of the mirror, wondering if your cufflinks suggest confidence and ambition or arrogance and insecurity. You try to exude an air of aggressiveness without reeking of desperation. You work to make a good impression, then worry you haven't been real. There is no doubt, first dates can be scary. Your meal is the one thing that shouldn't have your stomach in knots. This is a variable you can control.

Hopefully, you have already negotiated a meal-based date. I will leave the proselytizing for another author. But in this Epicurean's eyes, if you didn't have dinner, it wasn't a date. The beautiful Tony Bell (who, after several grueling interviews, finally offered me a full-time position as boyfriend) is my steady dinner companion. Friday night, our "date night," usually finds us at someone's restaurant. If you're looking for a date place that won't disappoint, I'd like to offer the following suggestions.

If you shop at Bill Hallman and drive a foreign car (or are hoping to date someone who does), you can count on **THE GLOBE** to reflect your urbanity without trying too hard. This midtown eatery oozes cool sophistication, from its ultramodern white interior to its casually-couture clientele. Its location, tucked away in Technology Square, at the edge of a university campus and across from a titanic bookstore, gives it the feel of a neighborhood pub. But a sidewalk entrance is the only pedestrian element of this place.

Inside, Chef Joshua Perkins orchestrates a symphony of vivention, from a prelude of starters which include tasty, tempura-ed asparagus, haricot vert and mushrooms, gulf shrimp cakes with mango salsa, or seared tuna, to a crescendo of equally impressive main dishes. Chanterelle mushrooms dotted the

smooth notes of my slate-grilled salmon. Tony's herb-roasted organic chicken had him ready to dance.

CHEERS TO... PRICE AND PARKING. The **Globe** offers validated parking in a garage on Spring Street (right in front of LA Fitness). There is also plenty of street parking. The Quick Fixe, a glass of house wine and choice of two small plates for \$13, is a great deal. Tuesday wine and tapas events are also fun and inexpensive. I am also happy to report that this, the toniest



of my recommendations, is black-owned, which fills me with a tingling righteousness, and offers you a fantastic segue into the all-important date topic of "personal goals."

THE RECORD SKIPS WHEN... DESERT COMES TO THE TABLE. For Tony, there is no dinner without dessert. While pastry chef Kathryn King has shown true genius in her rum-glazed pineapple upside down cake and perfect

chocolate cake, the portions offered for \$6 don't seem to make much sense to him or me.

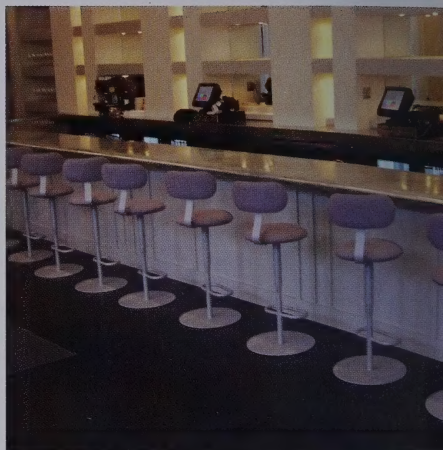
If you drive a domestic car, and your idea of date preparation is an extra hour in the gym, you may find the simpler, heartier fare of **Carpe Diem** (1085 Sycamore Pl, 30030 404.687.9696)

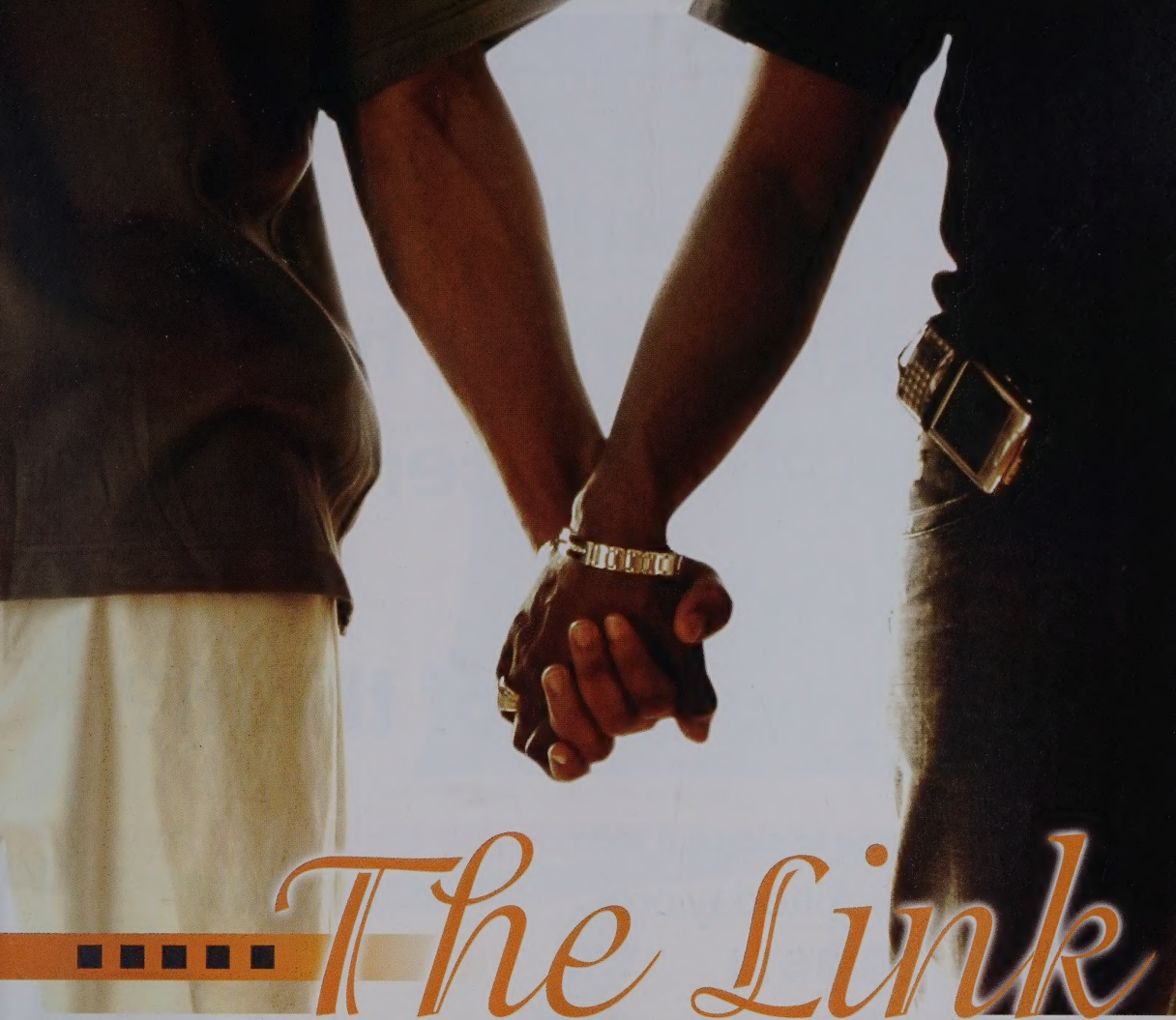
"First dates can be scary, but your meal is the one thing that shouldn't have your stomach in knots."

more rewarding. And if you're meeting someone from the Internet, or just not ready for the financial commitment of a full dinner, I suggest planning an **Urban Tea Party** (636 N Highland Ave., 30306 404.607.9777).

If you're so shell-shocked from bad dates that you find this column hard to read, I want you to think about... lunch. It's less romantic, but also less risky. Each of these places is open in the afternoon. And there's no more authentic excuse for a quick getaway than a call from a coworker in crisis.

KHALID KAMAU





The Link

Atlanta's first "old fashion" personal dating service that is not a sexual hook up service...like the popular on-line sites! Sign up and find your life partner today!

www.connectingbrothers.com

**Over 16 million
American men have
prostate cancer and
don't know it.
Are you one of them?**

It's primetime to check it today.

www.checkittoday.org

770-498-6611

**check
it today**
increasing prostate cancer awareness

It's your primetime

The People's Choice
Make Us Yours

BY THE BOOK ACCOUNTING

A place where relationships are made.

By The Book Accounting, Inc.

217 N. McDonough Street

Decatur, GA 30030

678-608-2775

www.ByTheBookAccounting.com



Services:

- **Bookkeeping & Accounting**
- **QuickBooks Setup & Training**
- **Individual & Business Tax Prep.**

"Hiring By The Book Accounting was the best business decision I made in 2003."

- Victoria Collier
Attorney at Law



Bernadette Johnson
President / CEO

STUDVILLE CLOTHING, INC.
LIVE & LOVE
WWW.STUDVILLE.NET
(404) 918-0363

The advertisement features three models showcasing clothing from Studville Clothing, Inc. The model on the left wears a red t-shirt with '100% ♀' and jeans with a red belt. The model in the center wears a black t-shirt with 'SUPER STUD' and a white jacket. The model on the right wears a white t-shirt with 'HUSTLA' and a red cap. The background is white with a rainbow border at the top.

EFFORTLESS ENTERTAINING

IF YOU FIND THE THOUGHT OF THROWING A GREAT PARTY INTIMIDATING, YOU'RE NOT ALONE. By using some simple tools and a solid foundation you can entertain like a seasoned pro. Entertaining is about celebrating the good life and surrounding yourself with all the things that make you happy. Good food, special friends, great conversation, the perfect music and just the right libation. Whether inviting a few friends over for cocktails after work, eight for Sunday dinner or 75 for Sunday brunch, planning is the key.



Two to three weeks away

Start with a fresh, clean canvass. Spruce up well traveled areas that are usually reserved for your family's day-to-day living. If you don't routinely entertain, a change of attitude and a burst of confidence can come in the form of a fresh coat of paint in the family room, having the carpets cleaned or simply moving furniture around, both to make your space accommodating for more people while giving a sense of newness to your living space. Once you're confident about your space, you're immediately more confident about inviting people into it.

Next, consider how you want to utilize what you have. Does the layout and size of your home read "party place?" Is it perfect for a large group of fifty or more

for cocktails and hors d'oeuvres or does it lend itself to smaller, more intimate gatherings such as a formal dinner party for ten?

Decide who's coming. If you don't entertain often, be very careful here. Invite people that get along and network well, especially with smaller numbers of guests. Aim for a good mix of people different enough to incite interest and newness but similar enough to make people feel comfortable and at ease. After you complete your guest list it's time to move on to invitations. Whether a handwritten note to a please join us, a personal telephone call or an engraved invitation with response card, remember that initial invite sets the tone for what's to come.

One week before the big day

Here you decide if you plan to do the

cooking yourself or pick up specific items from your local gourmet shop or grab and go grocer. Either way, plan your food out. Always have extra. The earlier in the day your party, the lighter the foods. Midday requires heavier foods and later requires lighter but more substantial foods. Unless you're a good cook, save those "first time" recipes for family night. Go with items that you have mastered.

Three days prior

Confirm your guests. Know how many to plan for. Then start planning the lay of the land. Decide where food will go and where beverages will be set up. Will you be serving punch, a full bar or simply wine and or champagne? For larger groups, thirty or more, I always suggest help. Whether it's someone to assist with replenishing food and picking up dirty dishes or someone

to serve or pour drinks, the added assistance ensures you spend the evening "entertaining" your guests. Professionally hired staff isn't necessary if the budget doesn't allow. A teenage family member or a close friend can serve the purpose easily.

The day of

Start early. No matter the size of your party, it's all about timing. Walk the space, adjusting the lights, ensuring that all spaces and surfaces are clean, preparing the music or entertainment and simply viewing the area in the same manner that my guests will. Then rest, relax and reflex and right before your first guests arrive, take a moment to enjoy your own party alone. Light candles...candles, candles and more candles. There is warmth to candlelight that soothes any space. Greet guests and remember to mix, mingle and have fun.

WARREN A. HUNTLEY, AN AVID ENTERTAINER AND PROFESSIONAL PARTY PLANNER FOR OVER 20 YEARS, IS PRESIDENT/CEO OF THE EVENT PLANNING AND EVENT DESIGN FIRM, WARREN HUNTLEY PRESENTS, INC. IN ATLANTA, GEORGIA.
www.whpatlanta.net

BRAZIL: SOAK UP THE FUN IN RIO



PHOTOS BY T. MOORE

8-Day Brazil Best Buy from GateTravel.com

From \$1150

DAY 1:

Board a flight that includes meals, drinks, and in-flight entertainment for your journey.

DAY 2

Arrive in Buenos Aires! You will be met and transferred to your hotel. Balance of the day at leisure:

DAY 3

This morning enjoy a half day tour of the city. Drive by the Plaza de Mayo, and the historical Government House, the Casa Rosada. See the Cabildo (Town Hall) and the Metropolitan Cathedral. Continue to the old quarter of San Telmo, and La Boca, famous for its colorful tin houses. Visit Recoleta Cemetery and more (\$57)

DAY 4

Optional half day tour to the Tigre Delta. Visit Tigre, an exclusive resort of summer residences, yachting and rowing clubs. (\$17).

DAY 5

Transfer to the airport for your flight to Rio de Janeiro. Upon arrival, transfer to your hotel. This evening, enjoy a welcome drink and orientation followed by dinner

DAY 6

Drive through the city to Corcovado Mountain. Ride the cog train through the Tijuca Forest, the largest urban forest in the world, to the summit and view the famous statue of Christ the Redeemer. Enjoy spectacular views of Rio including the Sugar Loaf, Guanabara Bay and the beaches. (\$59)

DAY 7

Tour of Tijuca Forest by open jeep. Pass by Cachoeira dos Macacos (Monkey's Waterfall), Chinese View, Emperor's Table and Taunay's Waterfall. Walk an easy trail to view tropical trees and fruits, as well as monkeys, birds and butterflies (\$41)

DAY 8

Day of leisure. In the early evening, transfer to the airport for your overnight flight to the USA.

www.GATE1Travel.com

Special terms: Prices vary and do not include: airport taxes, fees & September 11th Security Fee, Argentina departure tax, Brazil visa fees, tips to local guides and drivers. Call 800-682-3333. Land only price does not include arrival/departure transfers; nor does it include flights Buenos Aires-Rio de Janeiro.

YOUNG GIFTED & GAY: DANCER COREY ACTION



What is your background?

I was born in Oakland, CA, by a wonderful hard working single mother, with help from two aunts.

How long have been dancing?

I started dancing at the age of 4. Learning choreography from my cousins who had a performing dance group in Oakland in the early 70's. It was primarily popping and locking. I would learn the steps and they would use me as the secret weapon. There's nothing better then a little kid who can really dance. I started dancing professionally at the age of 14 with a local rap group who would open shows for Hip Hop acts who came to town. After high school, I started dancing in the club scene: moving in the drag shows and balls. At the peak of that lifestyle, I got a gig in Korea, which took me out of the club life and in the dance industry. So to answer the question, since I was 4.

Name three things you're proud of in your career and performing.

1. My team of dancers, choreographers, make-up artists, lighting and costume designers in my company, New Style Motherlode. They're the best in the industry and really got a brother's back.
2. The move to Atlanta. The chance to make a difference in Black Entertainment. I'm closer to the source here.
3. I'm proud that I've been able to keep God in the whole equation.

What inspires you?

The thing that inspires me the most; is life. What my family, friends, and I go through is what make my wheels turn. When I see people enjoying life, in pain, in love, in need, or just chilling, that makes me create. I just use what the universe gives me.

What made you start your dance company?

I didn't know I was starting a dance company when I started New Style Motherlode in 1989. I just wanted to have a super bad crew to battle other dancers and crews with. After meeting my business partner Teela Shine-Ross in 1994, she put the idea together about making money with the gift. Not just selling our souls to the industry, and clubbing the night away.

What are your goals in the ATL?

First, make the name Corey Action a recognized name as the new HOT choreographer and artist in the Atlanta Area among the entertainment field. I want to continue to perform my music so i can get a deal. Also, establish New Style Motherlode Entertainment a Studio and office here in Atlanta. Second, start a legit dance scene where dancers have an alliance, like the ones in LA and NY. Then buy a new 7-bedroom home, to house my folks from Oakland, so we can really take over!

Thoughts on the entertainment industry?

I think the entertainment industry is in need of something new. We need to change something up. Right now we're lacking originality and creativity. Everything we see and do now is what we just saw less then 50 years ago. It's a remake industry, but it doesn't have to be. There are enough ideas out there, but not enough people that take chances. We just play it safe. Playing safe is good, but we need to take a risk right now. If we don't, boy I just don't know. All I can say is, just put me on!

AVH

NEWSWORTHY

CAN'T WE ALL JUST GET ALONG

V-103's **Frank Ski** apologized to a group of gay and lesbian professionals during a recent networking mixer for comments he made on-air.

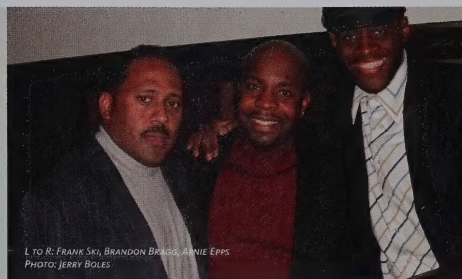
The apology came on the heels of a controversial broadcast of "The Frank Ski and Wanda Morning Show." Ski told listeners that he wanted to hit a man who aggressively flirted with him while at Club 112.

Many within the city's SGL community viewed the statement as homophobic and called into the

station to verbalize their anger and discontent.

Ski made an unannounced appearance at Brunch Conversations Networking Group's "Six Degrees of Separation," where his executive producer Arnie Epps served as host.

After making a verbal apology, Ski fielded questions and followed up days later with a public statement of contrition made on his highly-rated show.



L TO R: FRANK SKI, BRANDON BRAGG, ARNIE EPPS
PHOTO: JERRY BOLES

PROTECT AND SERVE

Darlene Harris is excited about her recent promotion as the Atlanta Police Department's new LGBT liaison.

"I get to play a very hands-on role in helping build ties to the community," says Harris, a former New York State Peace Officer.

In her new role, Harris is responsible for law enforcement outreach activities that will foster positive relationships between APD and LGBT business and community leaders.

She also educates fellow officers on better ways they can serve citizens who are gay and lesbian by developing sensitivity training curriculums and other professional development materials to new recruits and veteran officers.



PHOTO: T. MOORE

NBJC URGES BLACK CHURCHES TO BE INCLUSIVE

The Rev. **Al Sharpton** and Bishop **Yvette Flunder** (formerly of the Edwin Hawkins Singers) headlined the National Black Justice Coalition's Black Church Summit on Gay Rights.

Held at Atlanta's First Iconium Baptist Church, the January summit included two full days of keynote speeches, dialogue and small group discussions.

Opening reception activities brought out

community activists like **Craig Washington**, the Rev. **Antonio Jones** and **Pat Hussein**.

"These high level discussions are about developing specific strategies that will challenge homophobic attitudes in our nation's black religious institutions-from the seminary to the pulpit," said **Dr. Sylvia Rhue**, NBJC director of Religious Affairs and Constituency Development.



CRAG WASHINGTON
PHOTO: MARY BETH BLANDING

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

The National AIDS Education and Service for Minorities continues its fight against the devastating impact HIV/AIDS has had on communities of color. The group will hold its 10th Annual Art Auction 6 p.m. on April 22 at the Atrium at Sweet Auburn.

The event helps raise substantial funds

to help NAESM carry out its mission to serve those hit hardest by the fatal disease. **Rudolph Carn** founded NAESM in 1990.



T. MOORE

COMPILED BY JEFF HALL

BLACK GAY DOLLARS

(First in a series)

For Us, By Us



01

FRAGRANCES FOR HIM AND HER

Atlanta-based HIM Enterprises bring us classic colognes and perfumes with the release of HIM Limited Edition and HER Fragrance. With hints of cedar, sandalwood and bergamot, the lines are clean, yet sensual.

www.shophim.com

02

ALL THE RIGHT WORDS

Whether you are making up or breaking up, celebrating a birthday or in need of a little encouragement, the right words can be found in greeting cards from Say It In A Card.

For greater convenience the company will also mail your cards out for you. Customized services are also available if you're in need of special announcements, invitations and business or personal stationery.

www.sayitinacard.com

Five Easy Steps on Path to Immediate Financial Wealth

Choosing a partner is not like picking out furniture. You don't choose it because of its looks or because it's easily disposable. You choose a partner to add to the happiness you have already created for yourself. For too often, we as gay men choose partners because of what they have or can do for us. All of these reasons create false illusions that the relationship is sustainable when, in fact, all it's going to do is create a temporary pacification – that is, it won't last.

I encourage you not to live your life through others or spend your life wishing you had financial stability. Here are five quick ways you can begin to create immediate wealth for yourself ... today!

PUT THOSE CREDIT CARDS DOWN.

Destroy all those departmental credit cards (Nordstrom's, Macy's, etc.). You've already received your 10% to 15% discount for opening them. Because most department stores accept Visa and MasterCard, keeping these departmental credit cards only increases your opportunity to create additional debt. Credit cards are typically used for two reasons: You don't have the money or you use it for budgeting, and you pay it off within the grace period with no interest.

START PAYING YOURSELF FIRST.

Literally write yourself a check for going to work when you didn't feel good or feel like it. Aren't you worth it? Even if it's only \$10, it adds up over time. There are only two ways you are going to improve your take home pay: Bring more money home and reduce your output.

TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR SPENDING.

I hesitate saying create a budget, so I'm going to say chart your spending. For the past quarter, I have charted my spending in the following categories: gas, eating out, grocery shopping, ATM withdrawals and clothing purchases. I was amazed at all the unnecessary spending I had done. The first month I identified that I spent \$600 at the grocery store, \$266 eating out, \$545 on gas (traveling) and \$293 on clothing. That's \$1,704 in 30 days. In less than two months, I have reduced my spending in these categories by 65%. I saved \$1,107 from charting my spending and making changes. I now go to the grocery store and actually cook what I bought. When I go out with friends, I ask for separate checks.

PAY DOWN YOUR DEBT.

Starting with the smallest balance first. Reduce your entire monthly obligation payments to the minimum required and apply the difference to the bill with the lowest balance. Once that bill is paid off, apply those resources to your next bill with the lowest balance. This technique allows you to see progress sooner, thus minimizing your chance of being discouraged.

SET FINANCIAL GOALS FOR YOURSELF.

Make sure your goal is realistic, understandable and measurable. In laymen's terms, it's a financial goal that can be achieved, you understand why you are doing it, and you can easily measure progress. I suggest you start out with monthly financial goals. For example, maybe your goal is to save \$100 this month. Once you achieve it, reset your goal for next month and challenge yourself to save even more.

Applying these simple tips can bring a sense of personal gratification and financial stability to your life. As a result, you will find that the only reason you will need a man is to add to the happiness you have already created; you won't need him to put a roof over your head.

JOHN A. ALLEN

SPEED ULTRA PERFORMANCE

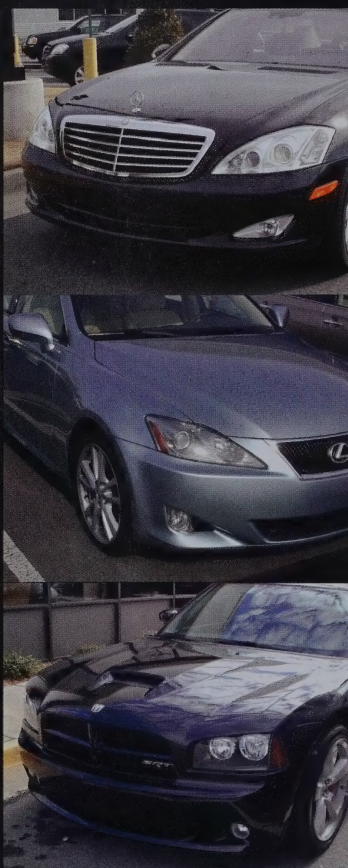
Here are some new vehicles I believe should be strongly considered if you are in the market for a new car. I will honestly admit that I am very partial to Japanese automobiles, based upon the above average reliability rate that most of them offer. However, working in this industry and being the enthusiast that I am, it's hard for me to overlook different manufacturers that are making an impact in the automotive industry.

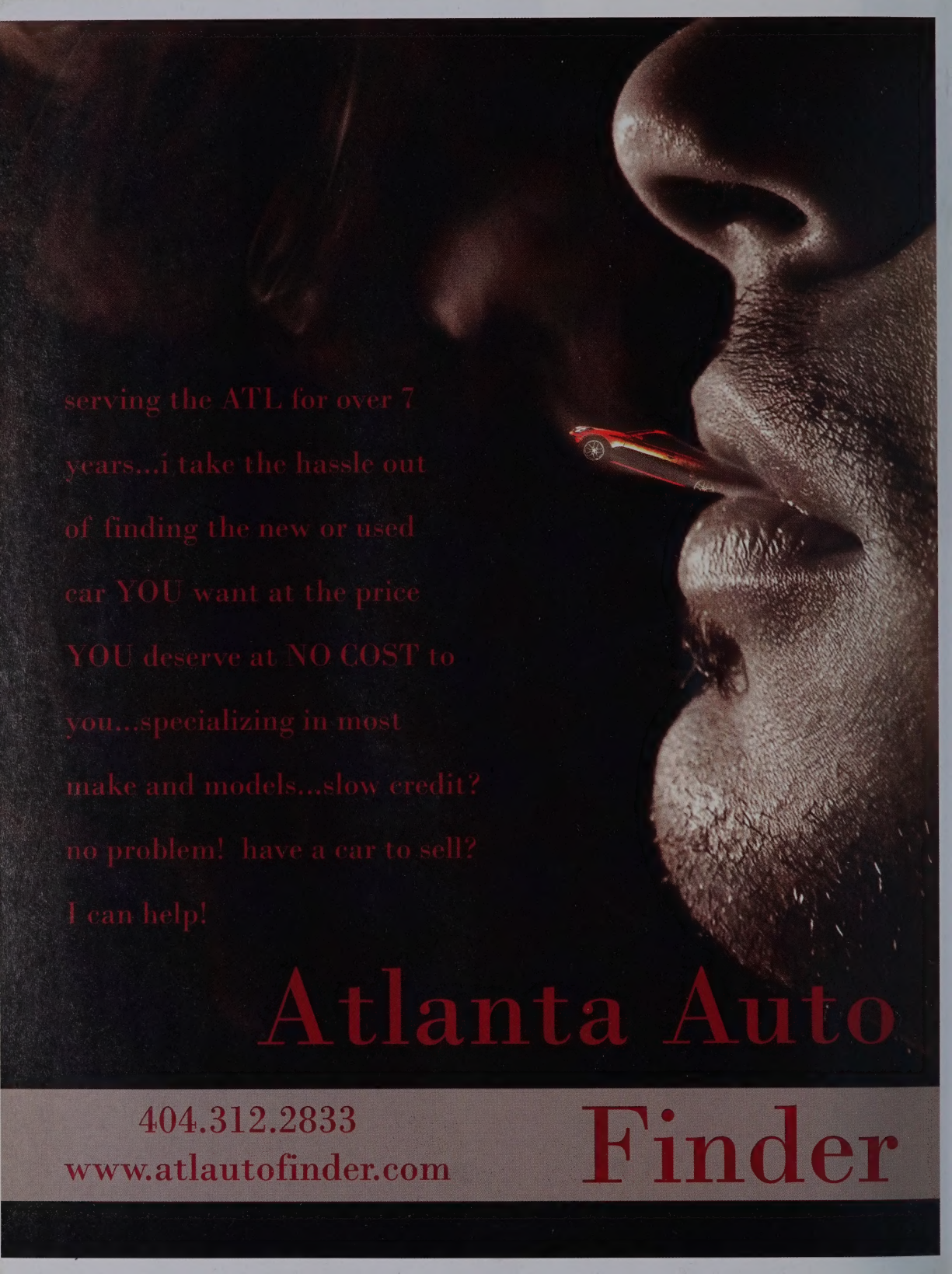
I had the opportunity to take a first hand look at the new **Mercedes Benz** up close and personal. All I have to say is WOW! It's larger, more luxurious, and offers many new safety and comfort features. Some of the new features include; Night View Assist, 600watt surround sound audio system, PCMCIA memory card slot, dynamic rear view monitor, and available panorama roof. Mercedes Benz is calling this car the most intelligent Mercedes Benz ever!

The new 2006 **Lexus IS 250/350** has been way over due for restyling. This vehicle is larger than the IS it replaced. It now comes with a 2.5 liter V6 or a 3.5 liter V6. All wheel drive is offered on the IS250 as well as a manual transmission. Be sure to find all the techs features that you would expect in a Lexus. Lexus dealers can't keep these vehicles in stock. Prices on this vehicle range from 34k to 47k.

The **SRT8 series** from Dodge/Chrysler.

Chrysler Corp. has been turning up the heat with the HEMI crazed, and if that was not enough they had to go all out with the SRT8 super performance 6.1 liter HEMI engine that is being offered in all of Chrysler and Dodge Autos that already carry the 5.7 liter HEMI. Expect to pay about 15k over MSRP, so have you checkbook ready!





serving the ATL for over 7
years...i take the hassle out
of finding the new or used
car YOU want at the price
YOU deserve at NO COST to
you...specializing in most
make and models...slow credit?
no problem! have a car to sell?
I can help!

Atlanta Auto

404.312.2833
www.atlautofinder.com

Finder

ASPIRE //

MARION

DESIGNS

DESIGNS THAT SELL YOUR BUSINESS

PROFESSIONAL
AFFORDABLE
& WE DELIVER

Phone: 678.641.8689

WWW.MARIONDESIGNS.COM

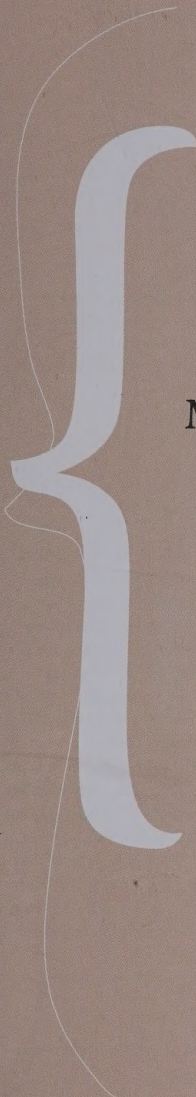
COMPLETE CREATIVE DESIGN SERVICE:

Graphic Design & Professional Photography

Book Covers
Bookmarks
Business Cards
Brochures
Corporate ID
CD Covers
Logo Design
Illustration
Posters
Printing
Photography
Web Design
Etc.







Just Living Atlanta recently had the opportunity to get up close and personal with sultry model and video star Melyssa Ford, co-host of "BET Style."

Melyssa Ford Gets Down To Business

Words / Sean Anderson

A native of Toronto, Canada, Melyssa is proud of her diverse cultural background. Her father is West Indian and mother is of Norwegian and Russian ancestry.

The buxom beauty's big break was quite a surprise. While working as a bartender in a local nightclub, Melyssa caught the eye of video director Little X, who cast her in her first music video. The York University psychology major soon traded in a spot on the debate team to pursue a career in entertainment—fast becoming the industry's latest it girl.

After appearances in Jay-Z's "Big Pimpin," Mystical's "Shake Ya' Ass," and Sisqo's "Thong Song Remix," Melyssa landed guest appearances on television shows such as Showtime Network's "Soul Food," ESPN's "Playmaker's," UPN's "Platinum" and BET's "How I'm Living."

More than just a pretty face, Melyssa can be found offering Smooth Magazine readers relationship and dating advice under the pen name Jessica Rabbit.

When we caught up with Melyssa, she was wrapping up a recent personal appearance

for Xtreme Entertainment during the group's Martin Luther King, Jr. Weekend festivities. Check out what she had to say.

What makes you confident in supporting gay and lesbian events when other celebrities may be reluctant to do so?

Because I am not judgmental, I never have been. I don't judge people's lifestyles, I don't judge the way they lead their lives. I don't have negative opinions as to the choices that people make, unless they are harmful to others around them. I really support the gay and lesbian community, because they are exactly that, they are a community. They really understand that there are strengths in numbers. When they come out, they come out in droves to support one another, that's what I am really all about supporting one another within the community, facing obligations head on. So any opportunity that I have to do things like this I jump at it, especially the opportunity to meet people who take the time out to write me, whether it's at BET, Smooth Magazine, or Black Men's Magazine, I love the opportunity to come and actually meet the people.

“my achievement has not been done lying on my back and letting someone else take the reins for me.”

We have been following your career for quite some time now. Initially Little X discovered you and you just blew up after that. It's like everywhere we look there is Melyssa Ford. Which one of your many accomplishments are you most proud of?

Wow, that's big, that's a good question, the accomplishment is the fact that it's starting to become a reality...I am trying to change the stigma attached to video girls and [I think that negative perception of the video girl] is kind of being dismantled. There are in fact intelligent women who do this as a means of making money to support themselves. We can be bigger and better if we set our sights right and if people broaden their horizons and look at us differently. Also, the fact that now I get invited by Russell Simmons, Dr. Benjamin Chavis, and the University of Chicago to speak on all of these panels and how my achievements and track record are being recognized is a great sense of accomplishment.

What action have you taken to invest in your career?

I entered this industry with a business mind. I always knew that videos were going to be a stepping-stone to something else... which were magazines, that turned from editorials to covers very quickly and what I really began to understand from this business is that it's about nurturing relationships. That is what makes or breaks you.

That quote that states: “It's not what you know, but who you know,” was not created because someone thought, “Oh this sounds great!” It really is an accurate statement, I cultivate all of my relationships, like those with the top magazine editors, so if I want to be on a cover I'm going to be on a cover and I'll pick the month and have it coincide with some major thing or professional endeavor that I'm taking on. I guess I've gotten so much respect in the business because a lot of my achievement has not been done lying on my back and letting someone else take the reins for me. I've had a hand in directing my career along with my manager who is also a good friend of mine. We've basically been doing this from a grass roots operation and it's gotten to the point now that everyone knows who we are. It's two women working along side one another, something that most people think wouldn't be able to work out. But, it does, it works out better than anyone ever expected.

With that said, what have you done to ensure that your success will also be long-term?

My path is different and the world is changing on a moment-to-moment basis. I try to stay current and relevant, finding the newest trends, but not jumping on every bandwagon. You have to really think strategically in this industry, it's very time sensitive.

You mentioned that you've achieved all of your accomplishments, by not lying on your back, but through your own merits. How do you feel about the memoirs by Karrin Steffans, “Confessions of a Video Vixen,” and her portrayal of female video dancers?

MELYSSA: Personally I have not read the book. I just think that her message is easily confused because she is not advocating anything that she did. She does claim that she was no better than a prostitute, but I don't think there is enough information provided in order to steer young women away from the paths that she took because it seemed glorified and I think that's a problem. I don't think that her motives for writing this book were altruistic at all. She made a lot of money and she knew that she was going to. And she's gotten a lot of problems as a result of it, because people are now like, “Yo, Bitch! You should have kept your mouth shut.” You know what I'm saying. But, those were her choices and God bless the child. I hope that everything works out for her. I just think that there should have been a little bit more precaution taken in what was revealed. Because she's kind of set a standard and I've been trying to set just the opposite standard. So we are on opposite ends of the spectrum. Personally, I'm sure she's a very nice girl, but professionally we are light years away.

So what's next for Melyssa Ford? When can we see you on the big screen in a major film production?

Well, it might be soon, 2006 has started off with a bang! So keep looking out for [me]. ■

To read more about Melyssa Ford go to www.melyssafordonline.com

presenting the art of wow!



From the very moment you enter the room, life transforms...immersed in the senses. The ambience created by just the right music, the wonder of breath-taking décor and exquisitely prepared cuisine...taste beyond imagination. Welcome to the world of Warren Huntley Presents. Impeccable staff, unpretentious elegance and an uncompromising attention to even the tiniest detail. We celebrate the art which is all things entertaining. It's all about the wow!

Contact us for your next event at 404-243-1838



Warren Huntley Presents

4752 Mayer Trace, Ellenwood, Georgia 30294
www.whpatlanta.net

jL

*a candid conversation with author,
publisher & businessman*

words/ anaré v. holmes images/ brandon king



"I'M NO LONGER ON THE
DOWN LOW... I AM MORE
THAN MY SEXUALITY."

Best-selling author J.L. King catapulted onto the national stage after the release of "On the Down Low: A Journey Into The Lives of 'Straight' Black Men Who Sleep with Men" in 2004. The groundbreaking book, now in its 18th printing, ignited heated debates throughout the country as readers buzzed about who's sleeping with whom.

King instantly became the face for brothers on the DL and has been called everything from a hero to a devil in lamb's wool. Love him or hate him, it's clear King is working overtime to extend the proverbial 15 minutes of fame into a lifetime of commercial and personal success. Just Living Editor-In-Chief Anaré V. Holmes talks with King as he sounds off on what inspires him, the critics and his next big thing.

HOLMES: How has your life changed since your appearance on the "Oprah Winfrey Show"?

KING: It's been a blessing. Being on Oprah played a huge role in the success of the first book. Because of her, more than 240,000 copies of the book are in print and God continues to open doors for me to do things that I have a passion for, like creating new businesses and opportunities to help others follow their dreams.

HOLMES: Critics challenged that the book and your appearance on the show vilified Black gay and bisexual men. How do you respond to those who feel you exploited your story for monetary gain?

KING: I never argue with people about why I told my story. I know in my heart that God chose me to share my experiences. My story is the story of thousands of men whether they're black, white, Hispanic, Asian or African.

Many people were upset because of it. Some disagreed or felt that I didn't tell the whole story...that I shouldn't have just talked about black men. And my response to them is still: you can write your own story. We live in a land of freedom of speech. Some of the misperception is that the book was about gay men and that's not true. The book was about bisexual men who lie to their women. The good thing is that it got people talking.

HOLMES: Another thing that happened was that you became the

"MANY PEOPLE WERE UPSET BECAUSE I TOLD MY STORY. PEOPLE WHO DISAGREED...MY RESPONSE TO THEM AND STILL IS: 'YOU CAN WRITE YOUR OWN STORY.'"

poster child for brothers on the DL.

KING: I know. It's really wild. I'll be at the mall and people come up to me and tell me that they either have read the book or are in the process of reading it.

I was at an airport recently and a little old white lady stopped me and wanted to take my picture because she had saw me on Oprah.

I love the attention and the support that I get from the public, but I am trying to downplay the "Mr. DL" claim to fame. Yes. I told my story, but I'm more than my sexuality. In my second book (Coming Up From the Down Low), I clearly state that I'm no longer on the down low, have not been in years and am happy with me. That I have moved on, my ex-wife has moved on with her life, and we are enjoying life.

HOLMES: You have literally moved on, leaving Chicago to set up shop in Atlanta.

KING: Life is a journey, not a destination. My stay in Chicago for almost five years was part of my journey. I finished my books and started a business, Urban Moon Publishing, there. I discovered who I was in Chicago, but I had to move forward and that led me to Atlanta. I still go back to Chicago on a regular basis, still maintain a place there and still have many friends in the area.

HOLMES: I can relate to the idea of moving forward into your destiny. I'm new to the city as well and find it to be a place where people are proud, optimistic and inspired.

KING: I'm lovin' it. I've become the unofficial cheerleader for Atlanta. The food, the social life, the business opportunities, the weather it's all good. I thank God for bringing me here. I enjoy my home in Midtown and I get excited every time I wake up and look out my window to see the city's skyline.

I'm still trying to learn my way around the city. I get lost sometimes moving from one end of town to the next, but whenever that happens I find myself discovering a new beautiful community that may have great shopping or a nice restaurant. One thing about it is I don't have to deal with heavy snow!

HOLMES: But it gets cooler in winter than I thought. You are right on when you mention the city's business community. Atlanta is a great place to do business.

KING: The city is ripe with opportunities and that's why I wanted to start a magazine with the city as its backdrop targeted toward the same-gender-loving community.

HOLMES: With the success you've had as an author, why create a magazine?

KING: I've always enjoyed reading magazines and am a huge fan of the late John H. Johnson, founder of Ebony and the Johnson Publishing Company. I read his book, and that taught me that you can follow your dreams and that life has no limits on what you can do if you really want it and have faith to make it happen.

After doing some research it was clear that there was an audience that could support a publication like this. I want to educate, inform and build a bridge between the LGBT communities and the heterosexual communities and I think we can do it.

I will continue to write books, but the magazine is my baby. I have put my money, blood, sweat and tears into it.

HOLMES: It helps that we have a great staff. It's empowering to know that both straight and gay Black people can work together along side other cultures to make things happen.

KING: I feel you. I'm proud of the staff, the people who wrote stories for this issue, the photographers who offered pictures and to my right hand, Charles Aiken, who really runs my company. He is a straight brother who understands that one's sexuality doesn't determine who you are.

HOLMES: What determines who you are? You have tremendous drive and I've often said that you are a true visionary, the kind of person who will either find a way or make one.

KING: My strength comes from God who wakes me up everyday with a passion to make things happen. To create opportunities, to give back, to inspire and to make sure that at the end of the day, I feel like I have lived my life to the fullest.

My biggest fear is to reach the end of life and see that I did not live

up to my fullest potential. So, I continually work to make sure I'm all I can be and I thank God for my health and strength. I pray he continues to keep His hands on me.

HOLMES: Many people may not realize that you are truly a family man.

KING: Yes. I love being a dad. It has really been one of the highlights of my life. My daughter lives in Washington, D.C. and is working on her master's in education and is an administrator at the middle school where she works. My youngest son moved to Brooklyn last year to follow his dreams to live in NYC and to become a world famous photographer, and both are doing great. My oldest son is married raising his two sons in Cincinnati, Ohio.

HOLMES: Have you found someone special to share in your success?

KING: Not yet, but I'm looking. I have made some great friends, though.

HOLMES: If you could talk to the man you were at both 18 and 30 what would advice would you give?

KING: I would advise myself to be honest with myself first and not

"LIFE IS A JOURNEY,
NOT A DESTINATION."

to lie or cover up who I am and hurt others just to save face and reputation or protect family. At 30 years of age, I would have sought professional help to help me deal with my acceptance of my sexuality.

HOLMES: What's next for you?

KING: I'm just getting started, man. The best is yet to come. We are looking to expand Just Living in major cities such as Chicago, Washington, D.C. People can look to see more books, television appearances and other quality projects. ■

Words/ Anaré V. Holmes and Patricia Hines
Designer Leon Parham Does It His Way
Hair/Make/ Clark Vincent
Photos/ Thierry Jones



LEON PARHAM HAS DISTINGUISHED HIMSELF AS AN UP-AND-COMING, CUTTING-EDGE DESIGNER.

From humble beginnings in the small town of Petersburg, Virginia, Parham — through his Mama's Boy fashion line — has created signature styles for celebrities that include actor Blair Underwood, André 3000 and the Ying Yang Twins.

"When stepping out in that special outfit," says Parham. "Realize that some people are going to love it, some may hate it, but no one should ever forget it."

With editorial work completed for Rolling Stone and Sophisticate's Black

Hair magazines, including a design that appeared on the "Oprah Winfrey Show," Parham's is sure to be a talent to watch in the future.

"I'm making progress," he says. "It was great validation to know that the year I dressed OutKast's André 3000 for the a visit to the Grammy Awards he appeared on one of the media's best dressed lists."

Look to see more of Parham and his innovative work throughout the year as he partners with powerhouse Xtreme Entertainment to produce several fashion related events.

Visit www.mamasboyinc.com for more information on Leon Parham Designs.

FASHION FORWARD



Modern man: Evening ensemble in silk crepe

Haute chocolate: Make an impression coming and going in any of these texturized chocolate and white combinations.



Leon Parham for Mama's Boy offers a fresh take on black and white.



“When stepping out in that special outfit, realize that some people are going to love it, some may hate it, but no one should ever forget it.” - Leon Parham

Fashion Designer

Flower power: When you want to make a dramatic introduction.



Glamour girl: Dare to be different in this draped silk cocktail dress.



So seductive: Show off those curves in this sexy, silk number with a kimono-inspired collar.



TURNING PASSION INTO PROFIT

Celebrity mom creates her own success

Words/ Chandra Brooks

TERESA CALDWELL LOVES FASHION. "I think when you have a passion for something that's what you should do." After spending 10 years as a fashion stylist for music videos, Caldwell turned her passion into profit.

Originally, Caldwell wanted to open a supper club but says, God had a better idea. "He said do what you love and that's how I got into retail." Taste Boutique is one of three companies she oversees. The newest had its grand opening last October in Atlantic Station, Atlanta's hottest new shopping district. It is the second store she has opened in Georgia so far.

As entrepreneur and mother of recording artist star Bow Wow, Caldwell wears two hats very well. "Before I had a problem with people only knowing me as Bow Wow's mom but now it's okay because I have my own identity." Caldwell says, it is also important to make a name for yourself in business. She says the first step is to put God first. Next, step out on faith and believe in yourself because if you don't, no one else will. Finally, do your research. "I didn't now anything

about owning a boutique. You have to be on top of it. The industry is hard." Fortunately, for Teresa, New York Jets star Curtis Martin helped ease the burden of the industry by collaborating with her at Taste. Having support from those who believe in your vision is essential to your business' survival Caldwell points out. "It can break you. This is one of the hardest things I've ever had to do."

The Georgia native admits another hurdle she had to overcome was not seeing enough Black business owners in the fashion industry. Not having people of your own race willing to show you the ropes can be another stumbling block. "Unfortunately, some African-Americans don't want to see other African-Americans succeed. We always fight against each other."

Nevertheless, Caldwell says she welcomes the competition as well as the opportunity to be helpful to others. "I like competition. It makes me work harder. I don't want to see anyone fail. My friends say, 'you just told them how to open a store' and I say it is okay. It doesn't take anything

from me. Taste is up and running." With Teresa in charge, Taste's future is sweet. She plans on having five stores up and running in Atlanta this year alone. "I've always believed in myself. I'm living a dream- from where I've come from to where I am now. I consider myself to be very successful."



How to get started in business

Check yourself

Everything is not for everybody. Take an honest look at your strengths and challenges and ask yourself can you get your hustle on and do what it takes to build and maintain a business? It takes vision, stamina, an abiding faith that you will succeed and thick skin to handle the rigors of entrepreneurship.

Research the industry

You don't have to reinvent the wheel. Public libraries, the Internet and trade publications are excellent tools you can use to learn more about the type of business you want to start.

Create and follow a business plan

If you plan on asking anyone for the paper to secure start-up funds and/or investment capital, he or she is going to want to see your papers in the form of a solid business plan that will show them how you are going to run the business.

Take time to repair your credit

This strategy can be done while you simultaneously work on industry research and that stellar business plan. The truth is many people in business exhaust quite a bit of their own financial resources. Good credit is the starting point to acquiring the necessary start-up capital. Remember, it takes money to make money.

Surround yourself with positive people

When the elders said watch the company you keep they weren't lying. It's going to take a tremendous amount of energy to build and grow your business and it's critical to have a support network you can trust and rely on when you hit your head against many brick walls. Seek out mentors and nurture personal and professional relationships that can hold you accountable to the vision you created.

Get over the fear of failure and learn from your mistakes

In order to have something you've never had before, you've got to do what you've never done before. Chances are you will make a few mistakes along the way. Don't give up, stay in the game.

GIVING IT TO YOU STRAIGHT!

By: C. Allen Alke

Dear C. Allen:

I am a 39 year old manicurist and want to open my own shop. I have a friend who wants to partner with me who has capital resources and seemingly good credit, but I really want to own my own business. The problem is that I have bad credit, and am in the process of repairing my credit. Should I wait until I repair my credit, which could take a while or can I start my business with bad credit? Help!

LF - Duluth, GA

Let me give it to you STRAIGHT.

Bad Credit in NO WAY stops you from starting your business. This is stated as if there are no alternative solutions. Where credit repair is imperative, there are necessary actions for permanent credit repair prior to this attempt and further more alternatives to starting your business.

Don't let bad credit discourage you

Ever heard of more than one way to skin a cat. When you file for a corporate status, a credit report is not run. When you develop a business plan a credit report is not run. A credit report is not run prior to hiring consultants, performing research or even thinking. When or if credit becomes an issue, accept and get over it. Find a partner with great credit and possibly money to balance your situation. You two will equalize each other; you have the idea and plan that he or she may not have but believe in and they have the credit and/or possibly money you do not have. Together you are a force to be reckon with (Synergy...look it up). I know this thought makes some entrepreneurs skin crawl. Get over the fear of being a partner or even a minority partner. Make it happen! You will still have 100% ownership. So will your partner. Partner A= 100% Partner B=100%. The "pie" then becomes 200%. Your cut of the pie represent 50% of that pie. Do you like Pie? Then eat now and enjoy before it's all gone!

This column is designed to enlighten you with "straight talk." in a non complicated fashion, regarding "behind the scenes" matters of finance or financial related implications as they relate to your everyday interaction with banks, people, business and politics (Domestic and International).

OUTright FABULOUS

The day my mom found out I liked boys

Words / Brandon Richardson

I ALWAYS KNEW THE MOST NERVE-RACKING DAY OF MY LIFE WOULD BE WHEN I CAME OUT TO MY FAMILY AND FRIENDS. Who is ever in a hurry to deal with the full range of emotions associated with the process?

The plan was to reveal my sexual orientation in my 30s, a time where I'd come into my own. I'd have the confidence from a successful career and the seasoning of life experience under my belt before disclosing such an intimate part of my life—so I thought. Instead, the day my mother found out came 11 years ahead of schedule.

I was home from college one weekend hanging out in Atlanta unbeknownst to my mother. I usually made it a point to let her know when I was in town so when she called me to see what I was doing I didn't want to lie because up until that point she and I had an open line of communication.

When she found out I was home and didn't tell her I remember her voice getting calm. I didn't like the way that sounded because in the past as a child that signaled I was about to get in real trouble or a good beat down. Nonetheless, when I went home she sat me down and started talking mainly about why I didn't let her know I was home. Then it happened, out of nowhere she asked it, "Son, do you like boys or girls?" I felt like all the air was being sucked right out of me. I had my quick moment of panic, what do I do? What do I say? Then the tears fell and I slowly spoke, "Yes, I like boys."

She started crying and I felt completely helpless, feeling I disappointed and hurt the woman I loved and adored. Then came a ray of light as she proceeded to hug me, saying, "You're still my son and I love you."

Those words to this day still resonate within me. When I told my mother I was writing this piece I could hear the pride in her voice. She said, "Congratulations, you are on the path of greatness and I am here for you every step of the way." I just smiled and told her thanks. God and my mother are the only affirmation I need in life. She has truly supported me on my journey of transformation, watching her son go from wearing baggy clothes to a well-fitted pair of True Religion jeans. Ms. Lady has not missed a beat.

I thank God every day for a supportive mother and family and pray that anyone who's struggling with coming out will have at least one person to make such a difficult decision and announcement a little easier. Honest, heart-to-heart conversations happen when we least expect them. My revelation came 11 years ahead of schedule, but it was right on time.



You Can't Eat Excuses...

History is replete with creative excuses about why things went wrong - or failed to happen altogether. But when you want prompt service, the only words you want to hear are "it's been taken care of."

Meeting your mortgage needs is how we measure our success.

- Hard Money
- 2nd mortgage rates as low as 6.5
- FHA Streamline Refinance
- 100% Financing available
- Investor purchase up to 100%
- 1st time home buyers
- Build to suit
- CREDIT SCORE IMPROVEMENT IN 30 DAYS
- Commercial financing available
- Down payment assistance available
- Bankruptcy OK
- PROPERTY MANAGEMENT AVAILABLE

Schedule a free no-obligation consultation. Only excuses can cost you \$20,000 to \$50,000 a month.

Phone: 866-731-DLAL OR 404-346-1544

Elisa Hall

FIRST FINANCIAL MORTGAGE SERVICES INC. - 6320 AMHERST COURT STE 100 - NORCROSS GA 30092

Sunday Morning

When The Church Shows No Love

IT WAS SUNDAY MORNING, AND MY SON AND I WERE CONDUCTING BUSINESS AS USUAL. WE WERE GETTING READY FOR CHURCH WHILE WATCHING "BOBBY JONES GOSPEL." During breakfast, my son, then 14, decided that it was time for a heart to heart regarding our new church. We had relocated to Atlanta only three months before we found what I thought was our church home. We had been attending the church seven months at this point

Father was quite comfortable with the place of worship we'd chosen, but son was not. He began to talk about an incident that had occurred involving himself and a young minister who was in charge of the teen ministry. He said the gentleman told him and his peers that homosexual men and lesbian women were not going to heaven. My son, though himself a straight young man, had reservations with this minister's beliefs because he is equipped with the word of God. I make sure of it. I asked whether any of the other kids who heard the minister's philosophy seemed unsure of what he wanted them to believe.

"Not after I got done with them," he said.

He told me that he let this minister and his fellow pupils know that

God has salvation and deliverance for everyone, even as a person takes his or her last breath – deliverance and salvation, that is, from anything we choose to call sin. He told them that God does not give man that kind of authority to condemn a group of people to hell.

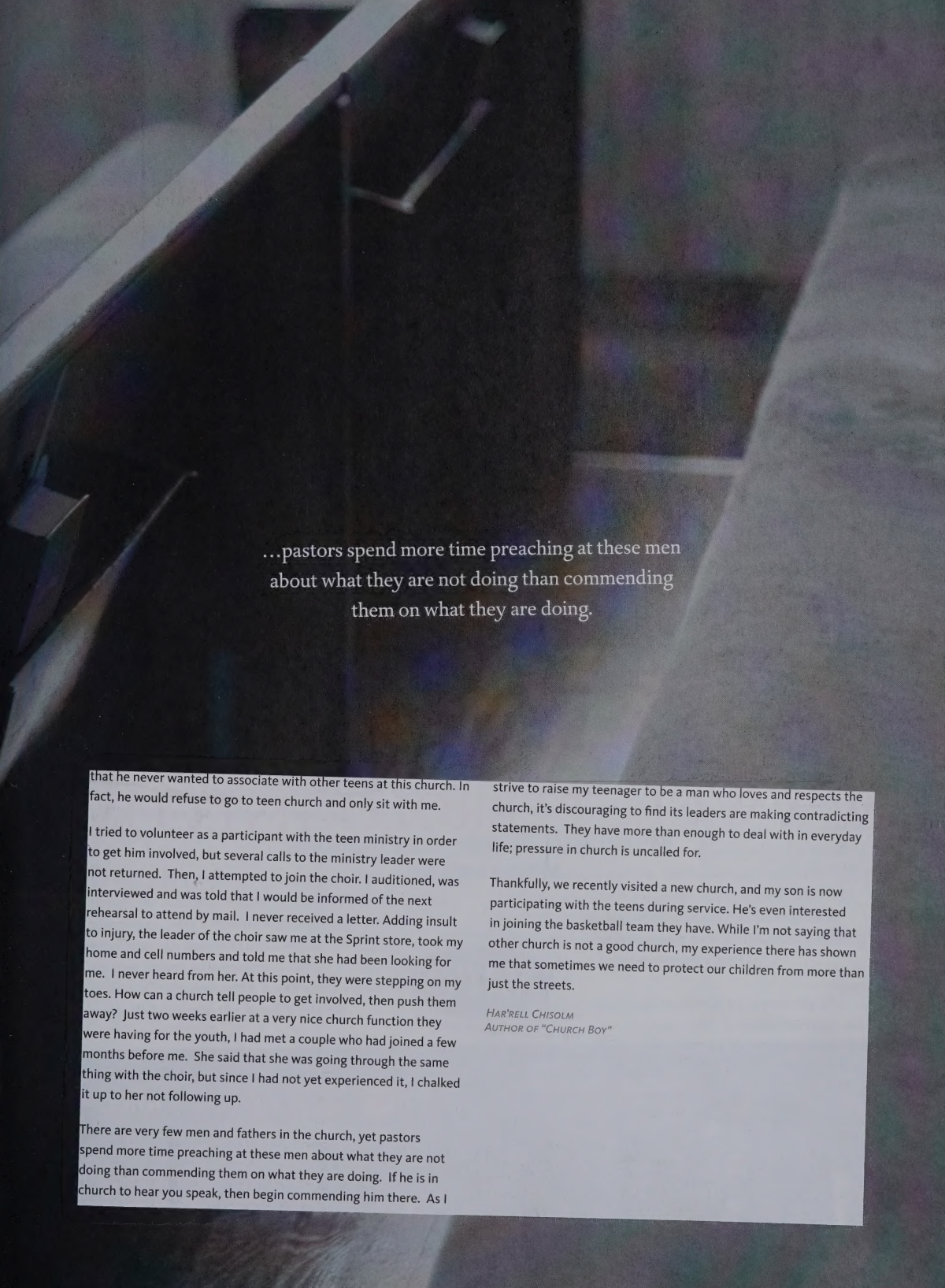
Let me say, before I address this issue, that I am no stranger to the lifestyle that was the focus of his conversation. So assisting him was not my problem; being able to confront my own insecurities was. At first, I was stunned that this minister would take the subject to that level. Then, I was hurt that my son felt like he had to defend his dad and his lifestyle.

Of course, our heartfelt discussion did not end there.

How could the minister say that, he also wanted to know, when the majority of the men are obviously gay?

"Dad, c'mon, really!" he said.

What could I say? I agreed with him on that point. What's more, I had never given our small family unit a chance to bond with this ministry before we joined. My son's continued discomfort was evidenced in



...pastors spend more time preaching at these men
about what they are not doing than commending
them on what they are doing.

that he never wanted to associate with other teens at this church. In fact, he would refuse to go to teen church and only sit with me.

I tried to volunteer as a participant with the teen ministry in order to get him involved, but several calls to the ministry leader were not returned. Then, I attempted to join the choir. I auditioned, was interviewed and was told that I would be informed of the next rehearsal to attend by mail. I never received a letter. Adding insult to injury, the leader of the choir saw me at the Sprint store, took my home and cell numbers and told me that she had been looking for me. I never heard from her. At this point, they were stepping on my toes. How can a church tell people to get involved, then push them away? Just two weeks earlier at a very nice church function they were having for the youth, I had met a couple who had joined a few months before me. She said that she was going through the same thing with the choir, but since I had not yet experienced it, I chalked it up to her not following up.

There are very few men and fathers in the church, yet pastors spend more time preaching at these men about what they are not doing than commending them on what they are doing. If he is in church to hear you speak, then begin commending him there. As I

strive to raise my teenager to be a man who loves and respects the church, it's discouraging to find its leaders are making contradicting statements. They have more than enough to deal with in everyday life; pressure in church is uncalled for.

Thankfully, we recently visited a new church, and my son is now participating with the teens during service. He's even interested in joining the basketball team they have. While I'm not saying that other church is not a good church, my experience there has shown me that sometimes we need to protect our children from more than just the streets.

HAR'RELL CHISOLM
AUTHOR OF "CHURCH BOY"



Before



After

ARE YOU STRESSED AND OVERWHELMED WITH THE **CLUTTER** IN YOUR HOME AND OFFICE?

LEAVE IT TO LAURI PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZER

TO BRING BACK THE BALANCE AND HARMONY IN YOUR BUSY LIFE!

FREE 1-HR CONSULTATION!!

CALL TODAY 404-451-3421

See before & after pictures at

WWW.CLUTTEROLOGIST.COM

NATIONAL ASSOC. OF PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZERS

MEMBER SINCE 2001



MIND, BODY & SOUL

The importance of preserving mental health in your relationship

Words/ Dr. Gary James

"LUNATIC." "CRAZY." "SCHIZO." "OFF." These descriptors are commonly used in the African American community to describe mental illness. Although they serve to diminish or dismiss mental illness, disorders such as depression, anxiety, and bipolar disorder can be as disabling as common physical conditions such as heart disease or cancer. When left untreated, mental health problems affect various facets of life including school and work and wreak havoc on our intimate and/or platonic relationships.

Much like the trends in other areas of health care, African Americans with mental health disorders are less likely to get the care they need. Despite recent advances in diagnosis and treatment, the stigma attached to mental illness continues to serve as a barrier in our community. Similarly, homosexuality is not embraced within the African American community and as a result, this presents an additional stigma. Today, as we continue to face multiple challenges in the workplace, school, and in our communities, the need to eliminate and/or overcome these barriers to seeking and obtaining effective treatment is urgent.

So, what does it mean to be mentally healthy? Among other things, the ability to function effectively from a cognitive standpoint, from a relationship standpoint, and from an emotional standpoint in one's various roles, whether as partner, parent, or employee is central to this definition. In an ever-changing world, it also speaks to the ability to maintain balance in the face of adversity.

Because we live in a largely homophobic society, gay men and lesbians in our community may be isolated and alienated. This isolation and alienation, whether perceived or actual, can contribute to poor psychological adjustment. African American gay men, bisexuals, and lesbians must contend with their minority status as African Americans as well as their minority status as gay or bisexual. Not

only is having two minority statuses stressful, in addition, individuals with additional lower statuses may have fewer resources to cope with negative life events, putting them especially at risk for depressive or other psychological distress.

Contemporary research studies indicate that people who are psychologically distressed may have difficulty developing or maintaining long-term intimate relationships. Additionally, such individuals may use casual sexual encounters to help validate their attractiveness and their worth. Casual sex may also serve as a distractor from loneliness or other types of psychological distress. If you are experiencing

...the stigma attached to mental illness continues to serve as a barrier in our community.

psychological distress, you can't help your partner with household responsibilities, you may not want to participate in social activities, or you may not be interested in sexual activity with your partner, all of which put significant strain on relationships. It is crucial for us, as a community, to be supportive of the individual with the mental illness and avoid discouraging statements such as "Oh, there's nothing wrong with you, just get yourself together."

Ultimately, we must understand that we are worthy of a healthful life; and most importantly, to know that there are possibilities and hope for all of us. A healthful life includes a healthful mind, a healthful body, and a healthful soul, all of which are factors that nourish a healthy relationship with your partner.

0.55

SEX IN THE CITY

Can Love be Found on the Internet?

Words/ Craig Stewart

SOME USE THE INTERNET TO GET ACCLIMATED WITH GAY LIFE. Others use it as a mechanism to "approach," because they lack courage to do so in person, or for the anonymity. It's a world where a man can become something he's not but everything he wants to be. It's a place where someone can look, even sound, any way he dares to design.

The Internet can serve as a magnet for those rebounding from a breakup or a resource for the resilient who still believe in love. It's an unofficial anecdote to loneliness or a tool to just chat to make new friends, possibly more. It's a device for the depressed as well as a sounding board for those frustrated with it all. The question is, "Whether the Internet can ruin a healthy romantic life?" As with anything, the Internet can be used for the good by the well-intentioned or for duplicity.

Several years ago, when personal computers were truly a luxury in the average home, there was the phone/chat line instead. Today, the chat line is practically obsolete, hence Internet sites such as Men4Now (M4N), Adam4Adam (A4A) and Match.com. The convenience and ease of the Internet sites makes it a wonder how the phone line was so successful for so long. The phone line allowed callers to scroll through a series of voice messages left by other callers. One's imagination was the only visual, which meant the person could only look as good as you could imagine. The major advantage the Internet has over the phone/

chat line is the use of pictures, including nude ones. However, Match.com is the exception because the use of nude photos is prohibited.

According to Allen, a 49-year-old writer actor, the downside to Internet dating "is that it reduces us only to sex."

Allen says that the ways in which gay men use the Internet dehumanizes us.

"A4A and M4N are sex sites because they give you the space to identify what you're looking for sexually, whereas Match.com offers space for hobbies, interests, the kind of guy you want, even a personal statement," without regard for sexual roles or positions.

"[The Internet] can be positive because it opens up resources," he continued. "Traditionally, we had to rely on house parties, clubs and Piedmont Park on Sundays."

On the other hand, he said: "It's very removed. ... It confines you to your home in that chair at the PC. The sound of the voice and touch are removed, thus the interaction is cold and limited."

Internalized homophobia is almost palpable on many of the profiles posted. They boast of how straight-acting or "DL" they are and insist that you are, too. In many cases, this total stranger has required that you are of a certain race/complexion, height and weight/physique before you consider contacting him. From

the semantics e-mailed/instant-messaged to a tugged-out wardrobe (for a well-thought out profile) to bold text that reads, "No fats, no fems," dating and the Internet has further complicated the woes of finding that special someone. Few would dispute that most people are on a journey to find complete happiness, which includes finding someone with whom you can share your life and to whose life you can be a witness.

The pros, cons of the online game

Some argue that Internet dating provides too much opportunity for deception, both because of the guise of fake pictures and the absence of one-on-one interaction.

Scott Bogan, a 37-year old senior training consultant, says, "Some are foolish enough to think their personality is so winning that I will overlook the fact that they've lied about their picture."

The beauty of interaction, Allen added, is that one can tell how a person really speaks and/or gestures. "The Internet removes that."

"I'll make inferences from a person's profile based on what they've said or didn't say," Bogan says. "For example, if someone puts, 'I like to shop,' I assume he's a queen, and I could be missing out on a really great relationship because of my inability to be objective."

Rashard Smith, 28, a claims assistant, adds that the Internet is "a good way to feel out a person before meeting."

"I like to talk without the pressure to have sex," he says, "because it's not in person."

Smith and Allen both agree the majority of users go online for sex or hookups. Nevertheless, Smith says, "it's still possible to meet someone of quality."

To many, the avenues to meet gay men of quality seem to be limited. There's a great quantity of gay men in Atlanta, many contend, but quality is scarce, and one has to sift through it all.

"If the site said, 'Lasting,' it would be a joke, and the site would be less visited," Smith says.

He believes a lot can be determined over the phone and admits that he has prolonged meeting in person for fear of rejection or a change in dynamics.

Jeffery Welch, a 37-year-old corporate trainer, on the other hand, has concerns with dragging out dialogue over the phone or on the Internet with someone he's never met, "particularly if they don't have the intentions on meeting you. Men, in general, have a tendency to be visual, and another part of my fear is (regardless of how many pictures you have online), who says that it's you?"

Dieon Williams, 26, a retail manager, prefers the spontaneity of meeting someone in the library or at the grocery store.

"There's something in a person's eyes, spirit, that you could read. That's something you can't get online. One pro is that you can be a little more open when talking to someone sight unseen."

It's no secret that gay Internet sites are catchers' mitts for men who are closeted or "down low." Some say the stigma attached to meeting someone in the club has been replaced by that of the Internet because users tend to be even more guarded as a result of the fear that comes with talking to someone you don't know. Nevertheless, the vast majority doesn't fear meeting, greeting and even having sex with strangers.

Going too far, getting control

Sometimes, the convenience of Internet dating can lead to addictive behavior.

Janet Hughes, licensed professional counselor

with the Southern Christian Counseling Center, says addiction is defined as compulsive behavior in which one has no regard for personal safety.

Warning signs, she says, include a change in eating and hygiene.

Understanding, treating Internet addiction

Some seek validation from Internet sites. The sheer excitement of receiving new mail feeds their addiction.

Others confess it's a means to add spice to their relationship or, simply put, to cope with boredom.

Some couples will readily admit interest in threesomes, with a disclaimer, "We only play together." The undisputed truth is whenever a couple is online surfing on what's commonly referred to as a "hookup site," they are undoubtedly on a quest to invite someone in.

The hardest issue to overcome in terms of treatment is breaking through an Internet addict's denial of the problem. Similar to alcoholism, the Internet addict must first realize the addiction and be motivated to seek help. Many people believe the only way to cure Internet addiction is to pull the plug, cut the modem wire or throw out the computer. But you don't have to go "cold turkey" in order to deal with this disorder.

Since the Internet is a productive tool when used properly, it is important to find a balance between Internet use and other life activities. The treatment model is similar for eating disorders or controlled drinking programs. It is to identify triggers that onset binge-behavior and re-learning how to use it in moderation.

People of substance can be found online. The outcome, whether positive or negative, is contingent upon your approach as well as theirs. "It may take 20 years to determine if the Internet is a viable place to date," says Janet Hughes, a counselor with the Southern Christian Counseling Center.

Warning signs of addiction

Do you routinely spend time in sex chat rooms and instant messaging with the sole purpose of finding cybersex?

Do you feel preoccupied with using the Internet for cybersex?

Do you frequently use anonymous communication to engage in sexual fantasies not typically carried out in real life?

Do you anticipate your next online session with the expectation that you will find sexual arousal or gratification?

Do you move from cybersex to phone sex or even real-life meetings?

Do you hide your online interactions from your significant other?

Do you feel guilt or shame from your online use?

Did you accidentally become aroused by cybersex at first, and now find that you actively seek it out when you log online?

Do you masturbate when having cybersex or looking at online pornography?

Do you feel less interest with your real-life sexual partner only to prefer cybersex as a primary form of sexual gratification?

Help

But there is hope, and COLA, based in Pennsylvania, offers telephone or chat-room sessions in 60-minute intervals for a discounted rate of \$95 for each session, or you may select the Multiple Counseling Package Plan consisting of three telephone or chat-room sessions for an introductory rate of \$270. Brief, solution-focused interventions are used to provide immediate results.

For more information, www.netaddiction.com or call (814) 451-2405.

NEVER ALONE

Companionship Without the Headache

Words/ Ravon Keith

MY DOG ALEX IS A MINIATURE SCHNAUZER THAT HAS BEEN MY COMPANION FOR ABOUT A YEAR. He provides excellent

company and generates an infinite amount of unconditional love. Obedient to my every command, he's always eager to please. However, sometimes he can be a bit stubborn and self-willed. What some may not realize is: a relationship with a pet is just like any other relationship. It demands attention and must be maintained.

Don't get me wrong; it doesn't compensate for a human companion, but it does alleviate suffering from the stress as a result of disagreements with a lover.

Owning a pet is a significant investment—it requires a great deal of daily commitment and emotional devotion. If you are considering owning a pet, there are some important issues to think about. First, think about the financial obligation that comes with pet ownership. There will be veterinarian visits, vaccinations, grooming, and food costs. Also, one should consider the time and patience that goes into caring for your pet. Owning a pet is similar to having a

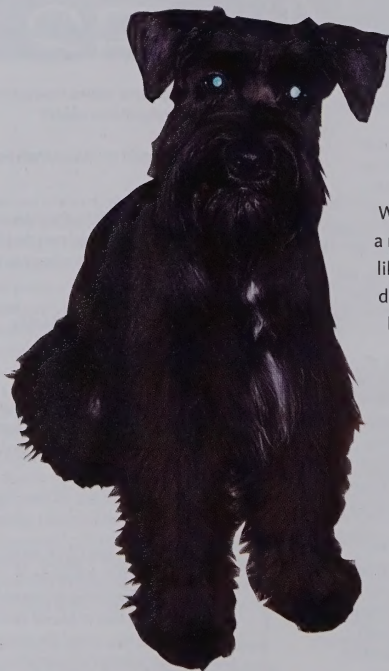
child. A pet is a living, breathing creature that adds to God's beauty on this earth. It's all worth it.

To see the look of joy and content on my dog's face is one of the most gratifying experiences I've ever felt.

I constantly talk to Alex as if he's human. He understands my tone of voice, moods, and even responds to me when I'm ill. Many people don't realize that pets take on attitudes and behaviors similar to their owners. For example, I'm a very laid back guy that enjoys simple things such as listening to music or reading a great novel. During the time I'm relaxing, Alex is right along side me doing the same. I actually think he enjoys it more than I do. It is not uncommon to find us on a Friday night in front of the television watching old episodes of "Sex and the City." He has become a very important part of my immediate family.

He's consistent and therapeutic during stressful periods in life. Others can relate.

A friend shared with me how, during a traumatic breakup, his dog was a means for him to channel the negative energy he harbored into positive energy. I've heard a co-worker announce she divulges secrets to her cat in order to keep from telling people. Through the good, bad and the ugly, it's good to know that I'm never alone.





CREATE INSTANT **MEMORIES**

Ritz Camera offers the latest digital camera's made with beginners and photo novices in mind. You don't have to be a techno wiz to create lasting memories captured with these user-friendly models.

1. View Point VU *Digital Camera*

- 3 million pixels
- Uses SD memory cards
- 8X Digital Zoom
- 1.5" LCD Screen

\$69.99

2. Canon Powershot A410 *Digital Camera*

- 3.2 million pixels
- Uses SD memory cards
- 3.2X Optical Zoom
- 1.5" LCD Screen

\$149.99

2. Kodak EasyShare C310

Digital Camera & Printer Dock

- 4 million pixels
- Uses SD memory cards
- 5X Optical Zoom
- Includes 4x6 Color Printer

\$199.99



RITZCAMERA.com
1-877-690-0099

A woman of faith reacts to life after 30

HAPPY AT THE TOP

Recently my partner reminded me that I was “getting to the top of the hill.” I didn’t know what she was talking about. I was sitting at my desk. I wasn’t walking anywhere; what hill was she referring to?

She explained that I was approaching the age when I would soon be “over the hill.” I remembered a bumper sticker I saw a few years ago that said “Damn I got old quick!” It seemed like just yesterday I was getting ready to go hang out in the club with my friends literally every night of the week. In my early 20s it was no problem to close down the club, take a nap (maybe) and shower and go to work in the morning. If I did that today, I would have to sleep for a few days.

At age 46 I’m not “over the hill” yet. I think I’m pretty near the peak. From this vantage point I can see in both directions. Looking back over the years it’s intriguing how the view changes. I remember the time I saw an older woman in a club on a Saturday night and prayed, “God, please don’t let me be wandering around the club trying to meet young women when I’m her age.” From the perspective of a 20 year old,

the older woman seemed out of place. It seemed like she should have been at home rather than hanging out at the club. Someone her age was supposed to be settled with a wife, a house, a job, investments and a comfortable savings account. She was too “old” to be in the club. At her age she was supposed to be at home getting ready for church in the morning.

Looking back, I also connect the dots between my view of the woman at the club and my view of myself. Since I had not come to terms with my sexual orientation it seemed wrong for an older woman to be hanging out. I thought she should be home getting ready to do something more “respectable” On the lower side of the mountain I had not accepted myself as a whole person created in the image of God. The voices of condemnation still ran through my head and much around me seemed to reinforce the negativity. It was hard to climb

through life carrying the guilt and shame inflicted by church and society. Still, there was something inside me that kept me climbing. There were lovers, joys and heartbreaks along the journey, and I kept climbing.

Along the way up the hill of my life I came to understand the older woman in the club. In many ways I am her. Being in the club didn't mean she was trying to pick up women. It could have meant she just wanted to hear and feel the music. Maybe she had a reason to dance. Maybe she had reached a point beyond guilt and shame. Perhaps her dance was a celebration of all she had overcome to have the wife, the house, the job, the investments and the financial stability. Perhaps her dance was a reaction to seeing the image of God in her own reflection. Or maybe she decided to dance on top of "her hill" on her way to the other side.

From the top of the hill we can gaze into our future and plan the path ahead. We see the benefits of the investments of today. There is good health as a result of eating right and exercising. Our spiritual practice keeps us centered and peaceful. We have a loving and joyful home. There are friends and family who we have loved over the years. A positive legacy is being formed from our love and care for all of creation. We can see how the world is better because we've passed through.

I am approaching the top of the hill. From this vantage point both sides look pretty good. The experiences of the past are what formed me. The "good" and the "bad" were my stepping stones. It's clear to me now that God was the power that kept me moving, even when trouble came across my path. As James Cleveland said, "Nobody told me the road would be easy. I don't believe He brought me this far to leave me."

My partner is right. I am approaching the top of the hill. And when I get there, I'll dance all the way to other side.

*Rev. Dr. Kathi Martin
God, Self and Neighbor Ministries (UCC)
and First Metropolitan Community Church, Atlanta*



"Since I had not come to terms with my sexual orientation it seemed wrong for an older woman to be hanging out."

ADRENALINE: SPA PAMPERING FOR MEN

WE OFTEN HAVE SO MANY RESPONSIBILITIES and obligations that it may be hard to find that special time to be good to yourself. As my mom says, "Baby, be sweet to your own self!" Pampering no longer is a delicacy reserved only for women. Men now make up over 25% of spa clients, according to the International Spa Association. The main two reasons people go to spas are to relieve stress and feel relaxed. Pampering and nurturing the body is as important for men as for women. Skin care is very important as it is the largest organ on the body that is designed to protect your internal organs from injury; defend against disease and infection, help your body remove excess water and salt; regulate body temperature and prevent excess fluid loss.

There are men who don't blink at the notion of a manicure and who stock their medicine cabinets with face creams and under-eye serums. Marketers have dubbed this group metrosexuals – heterosexual men who unapologetically embrace high maintenance grooming. Women and men have a tendency to notice the hands, feet and face of a man. Truth is, whether you are pampered or not, your hands, feet and face will be noticed. Choose to be noticed for having well manicured hands, nicely pedicured feet and a face free of skin problems. Many times I've noticed a fine woman or an attractive guy with dirt under the fingernails, and it just makes me cringe. It doesn't matter whether you are rich or poor, some things you just have to do yourself. Some of those things include: a periodic pedicure, a much needed manicure, a deep tissue massage and a great workout. Man shall not live by bread alone, treat yourself good.

How often? Frequency depends on your financial situation and your time availability. I often remind my clients that some of the rich and famous have massages on a daily basis. When your toe nails

are cutting through your dress socks, you are overdue for a pedicure foot treatment. Find a schedule that works for your lifestyle. Personally, I have a manicure and pedicure every two months. Regarding massage, I would love to be able to get a massage weekly; however, my schedule allows me one per month. Since I do massage therapy, I try to maximize each session by relaxing and distressing myself before, during and after the appointment.

When finding a massage therapist/masseur, ask questions regarding certification, training, specialty, experience, spa/massage environment, cost of service, duration of service, advance notice requirement and cancellation policy. Allow yourself plenty of time to arrive promptly for your appointment. Once onsite, checkout the bathroom facilities. This will give you a general idea of the facility's cleanliness. If your massage therapist didn't clean the bathroom, he probably didn't clean the massage room either. Remember to relax. Your body should be limp and you should not move or assist in moving any part of your body. After your massage session it's important to drink plenty of water to assist your body in the elimination of toxins.

Getting a massage does more than just make you feel good. It is a powerful weapon against stress, one of the most debilitating conditions men face today. Experts estimate that anywhere from 75% to 90% percent of doctor visits are stress-related disorders. Various studies have linked chronic stress to asthma, diabetes, gastrointestinal disorder, heart attacks, cancer and the common cold. Massage is so effective, that in one study conducted by the Touch Research Institute in Miami, massage therapists gave 15-minute massages to workers on the job twice a week for five weeks. At the end of the five-week period, the workers reported less job stress and were less depressed. The study

DARIO CARLOS MORALES IS OWNER OF SPA SERENITY LOCATED IN ATLANTA, GA. HE IS A CERTIFIED MASSAGE THERAPIST AND INSTRUCTOR OF SPANISH.
WWW.SPA-SERENITY-ATL.COM



further found that after a massage, the workers completed math problems in less time, and with fewer errors than their pre-massage selves had. Bottomline, you can function much better if you have reduced stress in your life. Massage not only can reduce stress, it also can give you a leg up on the competition.

To aid and enhance your pampering experience, nurture your skin by protecting it from direct sunlight for long periods of time. Exfoliate with a gentle scrub to get rid of dead skin cells. Cleanse the skin regularly with soaps that are low in drying agents such as alcohol, and moisturize the skin with nourishing milk protein, creamy cocoa butter, and shea butter with Vitamin E for a smooth, even tone. Fueled by Nivea for Men and Neutrogena Men, men's skin care is expected to reach \$123 million by 2007 at a compound annual growth rate of 11% to 12% since 2003, according to global market research firm, Euromonitor International.

Q&A

Is it bad to get a massage when you are getting over a cold?

There are several times when receiving a massage should be avoided. Fever and colds are contraindications for massage. You should reframe from enjoying a massage until you have fully recovered.

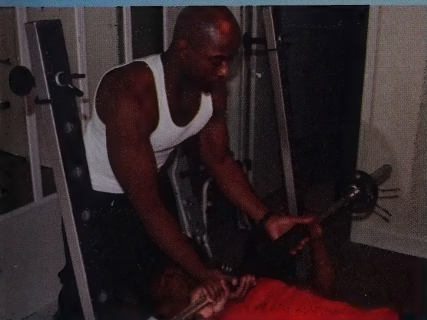
How much should I spend for a massage?

There is cost and there is value. How much you spend should depend on the skill, training, experience of the massage therapist. A good way to gauge is by conducting a little research. Contact five massage therapists to inquire about rates and services to compare. After your massage, you want to feel you have exchanged something of value for something of value.

Do I need to shower before getting a massage?

Yes. If you are having a chair massage or a draped massage, then it's a matter of preference. If you are having body treatment (body wrap, scrub, etc.), the shower is included in the package.

BODY PHARMACY: MUSCLE GROWTH



Reshaping your physique to add more muscle can be achieved through developing an action plan with the following in mind.

Muscle growth comes in a three part form: genetics, breakdown and re-growth.

Genetics give your muscle the "green light" for muscle growth when properly challenged. Breakdown occurs when you are performing resistance exercise (preferably heavy weight and low reps). Re-growth comes after you have broken down the muscle through exercise, developing into a stronger and larger unit. Just think of your muscle as scar tissue. It always repairs itself to be stronger than its original state.

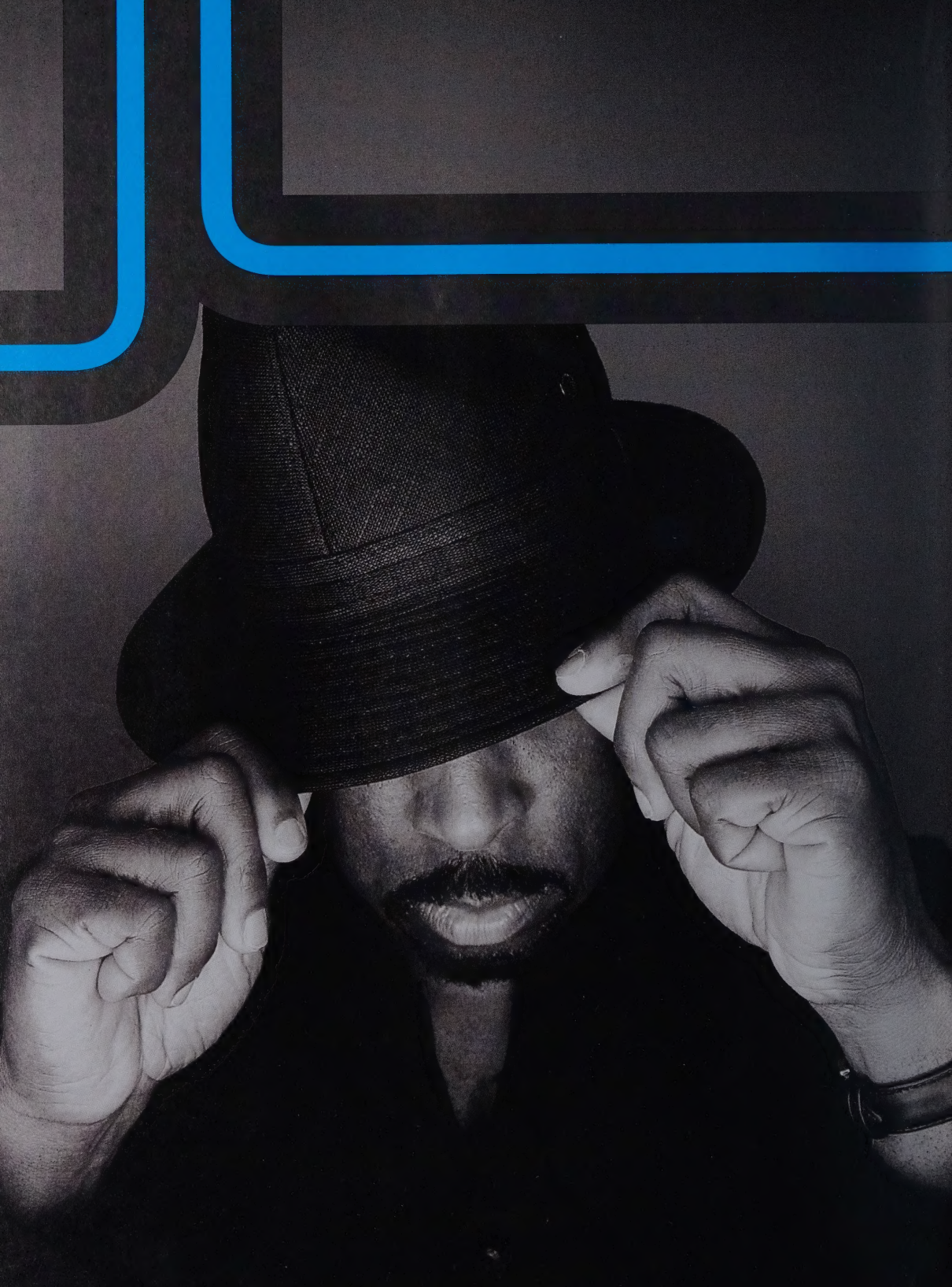
Nutrition will play a crucial role in adding mass. For maximum results reduce your carbohydrates, fats and increase your protein meals by eating 5-6 small meals as day in about a 3-4 hour intervals. Also don't overlook one of the most over-looked supplements to assist with muscle growth: the multivitamin. This gives the body what it needs for proper balance.

With a consistent plan and nutrition covered, strategy is key.

Make sure your lift equipment correctly and keep the weight at proportional levels that will keep you in the 4 to 6 repetition range over the course of 6 to 8 sets.

Remember to consult your doctor before starting any fitness program that will alter your body.

ERIC LARSON, CERTIFIED PERSONAL TRAINER AND OWNER OF THE BODY PHARMACY. YOU CAN EMAIL YOUR FITNESS QUESTIONS TO: BODYPHARMACY@COMCAST.NET



ADVERTISE WITH US

Just Living Atlanta delivers what Atlanta's urban gay and lesbian community has long awaited...a magazine that addresses their total lifestyle needs — a platform to tell their stories from their perspective. JL's sophisticated approach to covering the intrest and issues of this powerful consumer market is sure to make it one of the country's most sought after gay and lesbian publications.

For advertising information, call 866 205 9228, or email
advertising@justlivingthemagazine.com



RADIO ONE ATLANTA

THE URBAN RADIO SPECIALIST

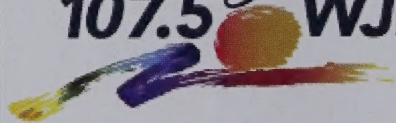
HOT 107.9

REAL HIP HOP & R&B
WWW.HOT1079ATL.COM

Praise 97.5

Atlanta's Inspiration Station
WWW.PRAISE975.COM

Smooth Jazz
107.5 WJZZ



The Smoothest Place on the Radio
WWW.1075WJZZ.COM



Today's R&B and Classical Soul
WWW.1025ATLANTA.COM



ne

Lifestyle
AND Entertainment
Network



Six Degrees of Sepaaraation: A Brunch Conversations Networking Group Mixer (Jerry Boles)



In the Life Atlanta MLK Brunch



Saying Goodbye: Candlelight vigil for Coretta Scott King. (Jerry Boles)



Scenes from X-Treme Entertainment's MLK Weekend Bash. (Thierry Jones)

LIFE & LOVE

by Craig Stewart

Who said Black gay relationships can't work? I've had the privilege of enjoying a love that was generous, consistent, and stable when my life was in turmoil. It was the only thing constant in my life at that time. He came into my life at a time when I was just trying to survive emotionally, mentally, professionally and financially. He was so interested in my dreams, my thoughts and my needs, but I couldn't open up to him the way I wanted or needed to because I was depressed, and my heart was numb because of it. I also knew a little about his past relationships and ways he had been hurt and taken advantage of. I knew a little about his past because we shared a mutual friend, though, we never knew each other.

When we made the decision to be together I went into the relationship thinking, *this is the one that's going to work*. As with all relationships, we confronted challenges that we had to hurdle together. If at any point, one or both of us thought we could do it alone, we were bound to stumble and fall — and we did. I found it increasingly difficult to share with him the things that were going on in my life for fear he'd think I had too much baggage. That I expected him to take care of things for me or that I was another slacker. So, in many instances I concealed the facts of my life. My rent was past due and the eviction process had started. My bank account was -\$660. My car was totaled to add insult to injury. As a result, I closed him out. Naturally, he began to believe he was the problem. He was never the problem, but that was difficult to prove because shutting him out became my routine for dealing with the pressure. Small things became big things, for me. I just wasn't happy with the way my life was going and no one seemed to understand what I was feeling. Consequently, I became irritable, terse, and short with him because he was the closest person to me. I couldn't manage my mood swings after a while of doing so. Even when I was aware of what I was doing, I couldn't help it. Life was getting the best of me. To combat my many mood swings he attempted to find my lost soul, the love he found and lost so quickly. He did everything in his power to make me happy, to make me smile. From trips to dinners to plays to concerts, nothing seemed to work. The harder he tried, the more I

pulled away because I didn't know when I would begin to see the light. I just didn't think it was fair that he so graciously gave his heart and I couldn't. So, I developed a coping method that worked for me and hurt him. I walked in and out of that relationship without notice, without reason, and without justification.

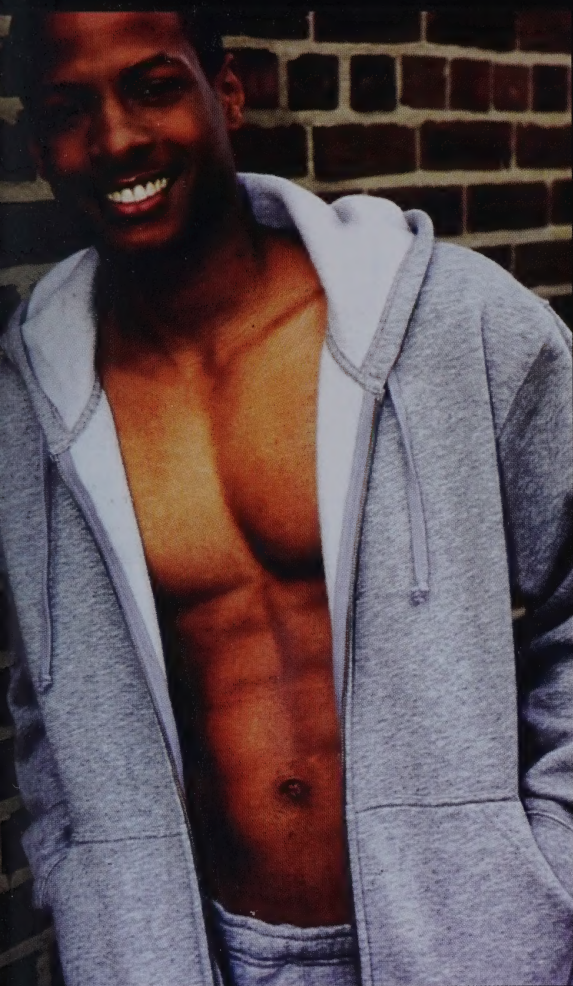
Now that my life has taken a turn for the better, his heart is too far gone for me to reach. My tears are not enough to convince him that this time will be different. My promises seem to be comfort for a fool. I don't know if my pain stems from the thought that he'll never love me enough to trust my love for him, or if I've damaged him so badly that he won't ever be able to trust love again.

My heart is empty without him. I only wish I could convince him how much I love and need him in my life. I just want a chance to love him the way he deserves. If I could've seen how things were going to turn out, I would've given him my whole heart — and not just a part.

"If I could've seen how things were going to turn out, I would've given him my whole heart."

Learning to love is the most difficult part of life. There are no instructions to follow, guidelines to adjust to or handbooks to reference. It's hard to imagine how the one who fell so hard for me finds it difficult to try again...I never got a chance to show him the best of me, and I may never find that kind of love again because quantity is great, but quality is scarce.

HIV/AIDS-Don't wait, get tested today!



HIV/AIDS among African Americans in Georgia and Fulton County

Fact

- African Americans are more likely to be infected with HIV, and
- African Americans are more likely to die of AIDS than any other population.

Fact

- HIV/AIDS is the leading cause of death for African American men and women between the ages of 35-44 in Georgia.
- African Americans represent 65% of the AIDS cases but only account for a third of the state population.

Fact

- Half of the African Americans diagnosed with AIDS in Georgia from 1981-1991 have died.
- African American HIV/AIDS cases in Georgia are 9 times higher than whites and 3 times higher than Latinos.

Fact

- By September 2004, approximately 30,000 HIV/AIDS cases had been reported in Georgia.
- 15,129 of those cases were in metro Atlanta
- 12,271 of those cases were in Fulton County.
- 8,731 of the metro Atlanta cases were African Americans, more than 57%.

Fact

- From 2002 to August 2005, African Americans in Fulton County accounted for
- 64% of the diagnosed Gonorrhea cases
- 54% of the diagnosed Chlamydia cases
- 67% of the diagnosed Syphilis cases

Fact

- From 2002 to August 2005, Fulton county reported
- 1009 African American male AIDS cases, 75% of the county total.
- 363 African American female AIDS, 92% of the county total.
- Among children under 13, African American children accounted for 100%.

Fact

- 75% of African Americans diagnosed with AIDS in Georgia will die from the disease.

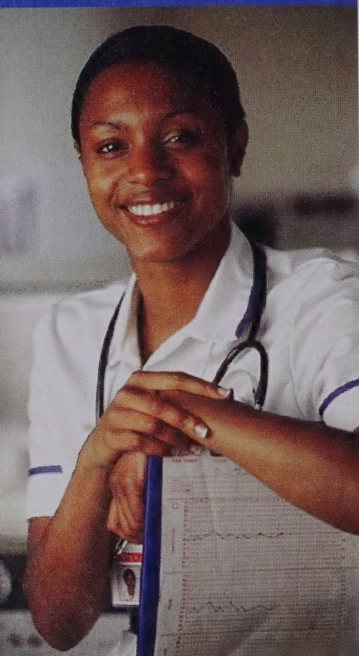
He doesn't know he is HIV positive
Looks Are Deceiving



References

1. Georgia Department of Public Health, Division of Public Health, Office of Minority Health, HIV/AIDS Among Minorities in Georgia. Accessed 11/17/2005 from website: http://health.state.ga.us/pdfs/epi/hiv_aidsminorityreport02.pdf
2. National Center for Primary Care at Morehouse School of Medicine, Georgia Minority Health and Health Disparities Report. Accessed 11/17/2005 from website: www.msm.edu/nccp/Publications/GA_Minority_Report_HIV.pdf
3. AIDS Action, State Facts: HIV/AIDS in Georgia. Accessed 11/17/2005 from website: http://www.aidsaction.org/communications/publications/statefactsheets/pdfs/2004/georgia_2004.pdf
4. ASTHO, Issue Brief July 2003: Collecting Public Health Data to Document the Burden of HIV/AIDS on Incarcerated populations. Accessed 11/17/2005 from website: <http://www.astho.org/pubs/IssueBriefDataCollection.pdf>

ATLANTA'S BEST HOME NURSING CARE, INC.



IN HOME NURSING

Servicing the Entire Metro Area

- RNs, LPNs, CNAs
- 24 Hours/7Days A Week
- Short Term/Long Term
- Extended Care
- Hourly or Live-In Available

Backgrounds checks on all personnel.



LICENSED • BONDED • INSURED

404-377-5600



RE/MAX

ADVANTAGE

Each Office Independently Owned and Operated

Eric Bell

Realtor

1400 Montreal Road

Tucker, GA 30084

Office: 770-938-1400 ext. 6032

Cell: 404-668-3742

Fax: 770-938-8244



Realty LLC

Exceptional Service for Exquisite Living

Garry J. Stafford
REALTOR®

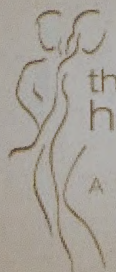
11539 Park Woods Circle, Suite 401

Alpharetta, GA 30005

Office: 770.754.5070 ext. 24

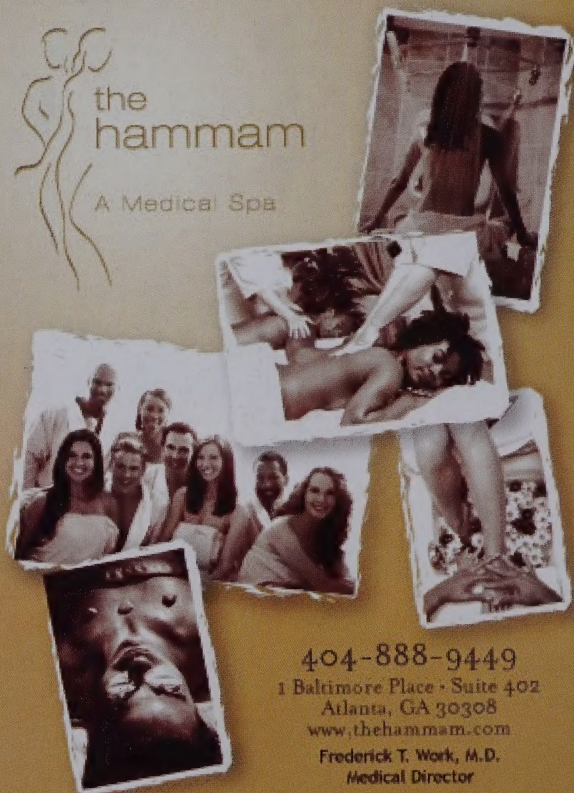
Cell: 404.642.6230 • Fax: 770.754.5035

www.edjrealty.com • gstafford@edjrealty.com



the hammam

A Medical Spa



404-888-9449

1 Baltimore Place • Suite 402

Atlanta, GA 30308

www.thehammam.com

Frederick T. Work, M.D.

Medical Director

Your Home Technology Specialists



***We design systems
that enhance your lifestyle
without breaking your budget.***



AUTOMATED
Interiors LLC



The only one you will need...

www.autointer.com

678-391-1500

"...People say that I should not be talking about the rights of lesbian and gay people, and I should stick to the issue of racial justice. ... But I hasten to remind them that Martin Luther King Jr. said, 'Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.' "

CORETTA SCOTT KING

APRIL 27, 1927 ~ JAN. 30, 2006

Showing The World to Their Front Door!

*The Real Estate Professionals That Show Clients to
Properties and Properties to Clients. Let Us Help
You Make Your Dreams A Reality!*



**KELLER
WILLIAMS**
REALTY
Atlanta Partners

Don't Just Live...
Live Your Dreams

www.montemurphy.com

Each Keller Williams Realty office is
independently owned and operated.

—“It's Your Life...Dream Big
& Think The Unthinkable”

“IF WE CAN'T DO IT, NOBODY CAN!”



Global Mortgage Group

Warren Loadholt, Senior Loan Officer/Mortgage Consultant

678-993-2461 Direct

888-376-0128 Toll Free

*All loans are subject to final approval by Lender before closing.



GLOBAL
MORTGAGE GROUP

Dealerships

4

Brands

7

Years in Atlanta

26

Baranco Automotive Group

We Drive Atlanta.

Baranco

Buick•Pontiac•GMC

Baranco

Lincoln•Mercury



Mercedes-Benz
of Buckhead

Baranco Acura

Mercedes-Benz of Buckhead
102 West Paces Ferry
Atlanta, GA
404-846-3500

Baranco Buick Pontiac GMC
4355 Highway 78
Lilburn, GA
770-985-3333

Baranco Lincoln Mercury
3265 Commerce Avenue
Duluth, GA
770-497-6900

Baranco Acura
7060 Jonesboro Road
Morrow, GA
770-968-5252